

The Contribution of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi to Indian Aesthetic Theory and Sanskrit Dramaturgy



Thesis Submitted at Banaras Hindu University
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by
Eva Cesar

Supervisor:
Prof. Shree Kishore Mishra

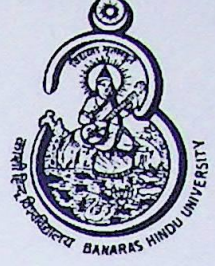


Department of Sanskrit, Faculty of Arts
Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

2008

Enrol. No. 268656

seen by
Arshaya
Tibhi



**Department of Sanskrit, Faculty of Arts
Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi**

**The Contribution of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi to Indian
Aesthetic Theory and Sanskrit Dramaturgy**



**Thesis Submitted at Banaras Hindu University
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by**

Eva Cesar

**Supervisor:
Prof. Shree Kishore Mishra**

2008

Enrol. No. 268656

**Copyright © Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University,
Varanasi, India, 2008. All rights reserved.**

❧ Dedication ❧

*I offer my work to all who have helped me,
so that, seeing my meager understanding,
they will be inclined to instruct me further.*

❧ Acknowledgments ❧

With gratitude I remember all my professors and well-wishers at the Department of Sanskrit, Faculty of Arts, at Banaras Hindu University. My supervisor, Prof. Shree Kishore Mishra, was always a source of strength and enthusiasm that helped me complete the task at hand. I express my gratefulness to all other professors as well who have offered me timely advice, encouragement and their refined humor innumerable times. Thank you with all my heart for allowing me to catch a glimpse of traditional India, and for nourishing my faith in the ancient Vedic culture.

I also feel grateful to my professors at the Department of Indoeuropean Linguistics, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, for giving me the foundations of my linguistic knowledge. My life would not be the same without the encouragement of my Sanskrit mentor in Slovenia, Prof. Vlasta Pacheiner-Klander, who introduced Banaras Hindu University to me and has taken a caring interest in my studies all these years.

From the depth of my heart I would like to thank my husband, my parents and many other relatives for their kind support, moral and financial, expressed in innumerable ways throughout my voluntary exile. They are perhaps even happier than me that the thesis is finally completed.

In the field of Gauḍīya Vaiṇēava studies, my heroes are my own Guru Mahārāja, Ṣṛēla Kāñēa-kāētra Prabhu, and the Guru Mahārāja of my husband, Ṣṛēla Bhakti Vikāsa Swami, revealing to me the rich tapestry of Vaiṇēava philosophy, history, culture and tangible spiritual achievement. Thank you forever.

I also feel obliged to my husband's Sanskrit mentor, the principal of the Ṣṛēmad-bhāgavata-vidyāpūṭham at Govardhan, H. G. Gopēprāēadhana Prabhuji, for his inspiring example of Sanskrit scholarship, and for his kind encouragement.

Lastly, I feel extremely indebted to the scholarship funds, both Slovenian and Indian, and to my distant well-wisher and sponsor Michael A. Cremona. The combined mercy of all my kind supporters has given me the time and the boldness to pursue my education till the completion of this dissertation. Thank you.

❧ *Table of Contents* ❧

<i>Dedication</i>	
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	
<i>Table of Contents</i>	
<i>Preface</i>	
<i>Overview of Literature</i>	
<i>Note on Sanskrit Diacritics</i>	
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	

Introduction

<i>a) Methodology</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>b) Defining Bhakti</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>c) Bhakti in the Sanskrit Sources</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>The Bhagavad-gītā</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>The Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>The Definitions of Bhakti</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>d) Bhakti Understood by Members of Other Religions</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>e) Hinduism and the History of Indology</i>	<i>xiv</i>
<i>The Hindu Canon</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>f) The Bhakti Movements – An Overview</i>	<i>xviii</i>
<i>Bhakti and Vedānta</i>	<i>xxi</i>
<i>The Bhakti Poets</i>	<i>xxv</i>
<i>Unorthodox Streams Within the Bhakti Movement</i>	<i>xxviii</i>
<i>f) Conclusion</i>	<i>xxxii</i>

Part One

Aesthetic Theory of Ćrē Rūpa Gosvāmē

Chapter One: Ćrēla Rūpa Gosvāmē's Definition of Bhakti

<i>1. 1. Ćrēla Rūpa Gosvāmē</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>1. 1. 1. His Life</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>1. 1. 2. The Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>1. 1. 2. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's works</i>	<i>16</i>

1. 2. <i>The Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu</i>	18
1. 3. <i>Çréla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Definition of Bhakti</i>	19
1. 3. 1. Verses from the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu	19
1. 3. 2. Other Devotional Scriptures on Bhakti	23
1. 4. <i>Bhakti as a Means and an End in Itself</i>	24
1. 4. 1. The Philosophical Frame of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism	24
1. 4. 2. Intellectual and Emotional Bhakti	26
1. 4. 3. Bhakti Surpasses Mere Liberation	29
1. 5. <i>Bhakti as a Means Only</i>	31
1. 5. 1. The Śāṅkarite Understanding of Bhakti	31
1. 5. 2. The Historical Upgrading of Religious Understanding	38

Chapter Two: Bhakti-rasa – Fusion of Theology and Aesthetics

2. 1. <i>The Bhakti-rasa of Çréla Rūpa Gosvāmī</i>	42
2. 1. 1. The Components of the Bhakti-rasa Principle	42
2. 2. <i>Aesthetic Theory of the Nāṭya-śāstra</i>	45
2. 2. 1. The Traditional Worldview of a Vaiṣṇava	45
2. 2. 2. The Descent of the Nāṭya-śāstra	48
2. 3. <i>The Formula of the Rasa Experience</i>	49
2. 4. <i>Definitions in the Nāṭya-śāstra</i>	50
2. 5. <i>Definitions in the Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu</i>	54
2. 5. 1. The Vibhāvas (Excitants)	55
2. 5. 2. The Anubhāvas (Indications)	55
2. 5. 3. The Sāttvikas (Involuntary Responses)	56
2. 5. 4. The Vyabhicārīs (Transitory Emotions)	57
2. 5. 5. The Sthāyī-bhāvas (Foundational Emotions)	59
2. 5. 6. The Experience of Bhakti-rasa	60

Chapter Three: Traditional Objections to Bhakti as a Rasa

3. 1. <i>The Appearance of Bhakti-rasa</i>	65
3. 1. 1. Propositions for Additional Rasas	65
3. 1. 2. Historical Precedents of Rūpa Gosvāmī's Theory	66
3. 2. <i>Bhakti Climbs the Ladder Towards Rasa</i>	67
3. 2. 1. Bhāmaha	70
3. 2. 2. Daṇḍī	71
3. 2. 3. Udbhata	72
3. 2. 4. Rudraṭa	72
3. 2. 5. Dhanañjaya	72
3. 2. 6. Ānandavardhana	73

3. 2. 7. Abhinavagupta	74
3. 2. 8. Bhoja	76
3. 2. 9. Mammāta	77
3. 2. 10. Bopadeva	78
3. 2. 11. Viśvanātha Kavirāja	79
3. 2. 12. Bhānudatta	81
3. 2. 13. Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha	82
3. 3. <i>Çréla Jēva Gosvāmē's Defense of Bhakti-rasa</i>	83

Chapter Four: Nava-rasa-militaà vā kevalaà vā ...

4. 1. <i>The Number of Bhakti-rasas</i>	93
4. 1. 1. Kāṁsa, Śiṣupāla, the Gopīs and Nārada	94
4. 1. 2. The Kāma of the Gopīs	97
4. 2. <i>The Rasas of the Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu</i>	100
4. 2. 1. The Five Primary Bhakti-rasas	100
4. 2. 2. Śānta-bhakti-rasa or Śuddha-bhakti-rasa	104
4. 2. 3. Prīti-bhakti-rasa or Dāsyā-bhakti-rasa	106
4. 2. 4. Preya-bhakti-rasa or Sakhya-bhakti-rasa	109
4. 2. 5. Vatsala-bhakti-rasa or Vātsalya-bhakti-rasa	111
4. 2. 6. Madhura-bhakti-rasa or Mādhurya-bhakti-rasa	113
4. 2. 7. The Secondary Bhakti-rasas	115
4. 2. 8. Hāsyā-bhakti-rasa	117
4. 2. 9. Adbhuta-bhakti-rasa	118
4. 2. 10. Vīra-bhakti-rasa	119
4. 2. 11. Karuṇa-bhakti-rasa	121
4. 2. 12. Raudra-bhakti-rasa	122
4. 2. 13. Bhayānaka-bhakti-rasa	124
4. 2. 14. Bibhatsa-bhakti-rasa	125

Chapter Five: Alaukika – What Does It Mean?

5. 1. <i>Abhinavagupta's Aesthetic Theory</i>	127
5. 1. 1. The Works of Abhinavagupta	130
5. 1. 2. Alaukika – What Does It Mean?	138
5. 2. <i>Common Points in the Two Theories</i>	144
5. 2. 1. The Principle of Sādhāraṇī-karaṇa	144
5. 2. 2. The Principle of Latent Vāsanās	147
5. 3. <i>The Locus of Rasa in the Two Theories</i>	149

Chapter Six: Alternative Expressions of the Experience of Bhakti

6. 1. <i>The Alaṅkāra-kaustubha of Kavi Karṇapūra</i>	157
6. 1. 1. Kavi Karṇapūra	157
6. 1. 2. The Definition of Kāvya in the Alaṅkāra-kaustubha	159
6. 1. 3. The System of Rasas in the Alaṅkāra-kaustubha	161
6. 2. <i>The Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī</i>	169
6. 2. 1. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī	169
6. 2. 2. The Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana	170

Part Two

Dramaturgy in Service to Bhakti-rasa

Chapter Seven: Drama or Līlā or Both?

7. 1. <i>Devotional Drama</i>	187
7. 1. 1. Nave raty-aṅkure jāte ... kiñcit tat-kāvya-nāṭyayoḥ	188
7. 2. <i>The Eternal Drama of Kāñḍa-līlā</i>	194
7. 2. 1. Vaidhī and Rāgānugā Kinds of Sādhana-bhakti	195
7. 2. 2. Vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti	196
7. 2. 3. Rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti	202
7. 2. 4. Entering the Divine Drama	206

Chapter Eight: The Aprākāta-nāyaka

8. 1. <i>Çre Kāñḍa, the Nāyaka-cūḍamañi</i>	211
8. 1. 1. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Ālambana-vibhāva of Bhakti-rasa	212
8. 1. 2. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs	217
8. 1. 3. The Four Types of Heroes	227
8. 1. 4. Rādhikā Para-devatā	230
8. 2. <i>Public and Academic Presentation of Kāñḍa-līlā</i>	231

Chapter Nine: The Charming Mādhava

9. 1. <i>Rūpa Gosvāmī's Poetic Genius</i>	235
9. 1. 1. Rūpa Gosvāmī's Kāvya	237
9. 1. 2. Transcendent Poetry	243
9. 2. <i>The Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭaka</i>	247
9. 2. 1. The Veṇu-nāda-vilāsa	249
9. 2. 2. The First Meeting of Rādhā and Mādhava	254

9. 2. 3. The Two Groups of Gopīs	261
9. 2. 4. Pastimes at Gaurī-tīrtha	265

Chapter Ten: Sarvānanda-pradāyakam

10. 1. The Definition of a Nāṭaka	274
10. 2. The Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka	279
10. 2. 1. The Secrets of Paurṇamāsī	279
10. 2. 2. The Worship of Sūrya	282
10. 2. 3. The Departure for Mathurā	284
10. 2. 4. Meeting Rādhā in a Play	285
10. 2. 5. Marriage with Candrāvalī (Rukmiṇī)	286
10. 2. 6. Pastimes in Nava-vṛndāvana	287
10. 3. Examples from the Nāṭaka-candrikā	293
10. 3. 1. Varieties of the Prologue	293
10. 3. 2. The Elements of the Plot	295
10. 3. 3. The Mukha-sandhi	296
10. 3. 4. The Pratimukha-sandhi	300
10. 3. 5. The Garbha-sandhi	303
10. 3. 6. The Vimarśa-sandhi	305
10. 3. 7. The Nirvahaṇa-sandhi	307
10. 4. The Yoga of Sorrow	310

Conclusion	317
------------------	-----

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Scheme of the Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu

Appendix 2: Terminology of the Aesthetic Experience in Various Translations

Appendix 3: Divisions of Bhakti in the Mukṭāphala

Appendix 4: The Sixty-four Aṅgas of Bhakti

Appendix 5: The Sixty-four Qualities of Çré Kāṇṇēa

References

Curriculum Vitae

❧ Preface ❧

The following study is divided into ten chapters. The first six chapters deal with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's theory of *bhakti-rasa*, based on his magnum opus, the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. As the influence of previous thinkers in the direction of accepting *bhakti* as a *rasa* is not so evident in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, this part of the thesis has been amplified with an account of the prominent works on poetic and aesthetic theory related to the topic of *bhakti-rasa*. Also, since Rūpa Gosvāmī does not concern himself with the opposing views about the *rasa*-hood of *bhakti*, a short account from the *Prīti Sandarbha* is added, the acclaimed work of Rūpa Gosvāmī's nephew and student, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī. He refutes the traditional doubts about *bhakti-rasa*, mostly those influenced by the line of thought of the Kashmiri philosopher Abhinavagupta.

Another text included in the account is the *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, which, like Rūpa Gosvāmī's two works, is closer to a theological treatise than a classical work on aesthetic theory. It sheds light on how the *bhakti* theologians endeavored to put into words their intuitions on the phenomenon of *bhakti* and its experience compared to the concept of *rasa* of the classical aesthetic theory. Another writer who touches on *bhakti* in his poetic / aesthetic treatise is Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha. His points are interesting because they ultimately deny the status of *rasa* to the feeling of *bhakti* towards God. He thus represents the *pūrvapakṣa* of the orthodox community of poetic theorists who desisted the attempt of the *Vaiṣṇavas* to make place for *bhakti-rasa* within the classical poetic theory. Another author from the *Gauḍīya* community, sharing the beliefs of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rūpa Gosvāmī, was Kavi Karṇapūra. His poetic treatise, the *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*, is interesting for its own treatment of *rasa*, and shows how the members of the *Caitanyaite* line were innovative in their approaches to the concept.

The last four chapters of the thesis expand the notion of *bhakti-rasa* to the field of classical Sanskrit drama. The thesis tries to make a sober entrance into Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's highest and most appraised literary accomplishments, and attempts to approximate his own purpose behind them. The works consulted are his *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, a short compendium for writers of *nāṭakas* with *Vaiṣṇavite* themes, and the three dramatic works he compiled.

In dealing with diverse interpretations of the phenomenon of *bhakti*, I openly admit that my views are firmly rooted in the teachings of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism*. In any kind of representation, justice to *bhakti* can only be done through personal experiences born of commitment, and serious writing about it cannot be attempted from the coldly secular outside, no matter how academically correct that may seem to some. I have made sure to fairly present the *pūrvapakṣas* against the *rasa*-hood of *bhakti*, but I cannot claim to be neutral about the issue, as will be evident in the text.

❧ Overview of Literature ❧

In the present thesis, I have taken advantage of a few separate fields of literature. First and foremost are the writings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī himself, their editions and translations, and the secondary works on the history of *Vaiṣṇava bhakti* – mostly from traditional *sampradāyik* sources as they tend to be the most authoritative. The *Gauḍīya sampradāya* can justly be proud of its rich literary legacy, and subsequent generations of disciples continue to imbibe from the tradition a vibrant impetus for publishing *bhakti-granthas*. Short extracts of traditional accounts and arguments will appear throughout the dissertation. From the other angle, the thesis borders on the classical aesthetic and poetic theories, and both demanded their share of attention. My professors at Banaras Hindu University have helped me to locate the necessary textual sources for this segment of the thesis. I feel immeasurable gratitude towards the few teachers and writers who have helped me to understand a drop of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's thought, and who have kindly shown me the way how to relate his line of reasoning to the world of the classical aesthetic and poetic theories.

In India, the first contributions to unveiling Rūpa Gosvāmī's aesthetic theory in the academic circles have been the works of the Late Mrs. Premrata Sharma of Banaras Hindu University (PhD thesis at BHU in 1954, "*Studies in Bhakti-rasa according to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī*"), and a similar treatise published in Delhi in 1996 by Raghu Nath Sharma, entitled "*Bhakti in the Vaiṣṇava Rasa-śāstra*". These two works have proven to be immensely helpful. Without the assistance of a few recent translations and studies on the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, this thesis would not have been possible. In 2003, a full English and Hindi translation of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* was published by the Indira Gandhi Institute for the Arts. Another translation, with an invaluable addition of commentaries by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, was graciously presented by Bhānu Swami.

Last but not at all least, the monumental work of my *parama-guru*, Śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, "*The Nectar of Devotion*", a summary study of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, is at the same time the sweet beginning and also the ripe, mature peak of my interest in the works of Rūpa Gosvāmī; much like Madhvācārya's observation about *bhakti*:

bhaktyā jñānam tato bhaktis tato dṛṣṭis tataś ca sā
tato muktis tato bhaktis saiva syāt sukha-rūpiṇī

"*Bhakti* gives knowledge, and knowledge helps the growth of *bhakti* further, leading to self-realization. That again makes *bhakti* stronger, and by that strong *bhakti*, one is able to attain liberation. After liberation, one is blessed with the highest and purest kind of *bhakti*, which is an end in itself, in the form of the highest bliss."

❧ *A Note on Sanskrit Diacritics* ❧

The Sanskrit, Hindi and Bengali words are diacritized according to international standards, the only exceptions being those personal names which are better known in their anglicized variant. This principle is extended to Sanskrit and Hindi words that are widely used in their anglicized variants, like sari. All Sanskrit words are italicized, except personal and place names. In quotes, I have taken the liberty to fully diacritize all Sanskrit words even if the original does not have the diacritic marks, for the sake of uniformity in the running text. In writing Sanskrit words, I use nominative forms in nouns like *ātmā*, *govāmī*, but use the base form in nouns ending with *visarga* in the nominative, i.e. Kṛṣṇa.

❧ *List of Abbreviations* ❧

Within the thesis, only the most frequently used titles of works have been abbreviated. When mentioned for the first time in the text, they are spelled out fully.

AK	<i>Alaṅkāra-kaustubha</i>
AP	<i>Agni Purāṇa</i>
Bhāg.	<i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i>
BR	<i>Bhakti-rasāyana</i>
BRS	<i>Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu</i>
BS	<i>Brahma-saṁhitā</i>
CC	<i>Caitanya-caritāmṛta</i>
DhvĀ	<i>Dhvanyāloka</i>
DR	<i>Daśarūpaka</i>
KĀ	<i>Kāvya-ālaṅkāra</i>
KĀS	<i>Kāvya-ālaṅkāra-sāra</i>
KP	<i>Kāvya-prakāśa</i>
LM	<i>Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka</i>
NŚ	<i>Nāṭya-śāstra</i>
RT	<i>Rasa-taraṅginī</i>
SD	<i>Sāhitya-darpaṇa</i>
UN	<i>Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi</i>
VM	<i>Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭaka</i>

Bhakti and the Bhakti Movements

Introduction

❧ *Introduction* ❧

Bhakti and the Bhakti Movements

❧ *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movements* ❧

a) *Methodology*

Many traditional Sanskrit works deal with the notion of *bhakti*, devotion to God. And in their wake, as an introduction to *bhakti*, many academic works have been written so far, so that the relevance of another one may be questioned. From the point of view of *bhakti*, the more we speak about *bhakti* the better, but the philosophy of *bhakti* will shine through in its actual brilliance only if a few traditional prerequisites are met. Therefore, the only fresh characteristic that this dissertation may hope to offer is its determined stress on treating *bhakti* in its original environment, in the fullness of the ancient culture and understanding that traditionally surrounded *bhakti*, and made it into a convincing, full-fledged Weltanschauung, with a demanding call to put its theory into practice.

The introduction begins with the notion of “*bhakti movements*” as a more or less medieval phenomenon, gives a short scriptural overview of the philosophy of *bhakti*, briefly touches on the history of indology, and the term Hinduism. All these issues are approached in the light of the *siddhānta* of the particular school of *bhakti* which will be in the limelight throughout the dissertation, the *Gauḍīya* line of *Vaiṣṇavism* established by the mystic saint Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1533), and monumentalized in the writings of his leading disciple, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (1489-1564). My reasoning is that in approximating the stances of that particular *sampradāya* (lineage), the traditional worldview of a *Vaiṣṇava* devotee will stand up in front of our eyes with its full justification and strength. I consider this highly necessary even in academic work, if not *especially* in academic work which by definition should strive at presenting reality without bias. The goal of my research is to adequately present the atmosphere of *Vaiṣṇava-bhakti*, which could sometimes be at cross purposes with the rigorous academic ways (that is, Western). Rigorousness per se is very welcome, but it should not be allowed to arch over the traditional understanding, marring it and making it ideologically and functionally irrelevant. In the instances of the overlapping of the two worlds, the traditional and the academic, I have chosen to take sides with the traditional views, and have tried to indicate the necessity of such sensitivity on the part of possible researchers. Through writing I wish to pinpoint the particular adverse notions, prejudices and premises that might prevent us from experiencing the full effect of the philosophy of *bhakti*.

b) Defining Bhakti

Bhakti is a Sanskrit term for religious affection or devotion directed at a single divinity¹. Traditionally, *bhakti* is hallowed as both the *path* and the *goal* of religious endeavor². In its practicing stage, *bhakti* is a mechanical imitation of acts characteristic of a devoted heart. Eventually, through Divine Grace and persistent practice, it comes to indicate these same activities, now performed by the soul awakened in devotion. The practice of *bhakti* leads to perfect emotional involvement with the Deity, and salvation of a very personal kind which supports that involvement further. Much of this thesis will delineate this internal religious development, in the sacred footsteps of the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas*.

In recent academic research, it has become somewhat fashionable to speak of the collective entity, the '*bhakti movement*'³, consisting of more or less separate but related *bhakti* movements. The many-stranded nature of this composite entity is a result of the possible multiple interpretations of its philosophical basis, and its varied social history in different parts of the Indian subcontinent. Since the major medieval *bhakti* revivals began as early as the 11th century A.D. and have continued up to the 17th century, it is difficult to think of an adequate historical demarcation to encompass them all.⁴

The other way which makes the term '*bhakti movements*' inadequate is their astounding philosophical loyalty to age-old, ancient scriptural traditions of India, and their ability to trace back the roots of their movements rather far into Indian history. Some would argue that devotionism cannot surge up as a 'revival' unless it was alive and vibrant in the past as well. That is exactly the collective memory of

¹ Grammatically, the word *bhakti* is formed with the Sanskrit verb *bhaj-* (*sevāyām*), 'to serve with affection, worship, adore', and the noun-forming suffix *-ktin*.

² This meaningful detail of the philosophy of *bhakti* explains the proverbial opposition of the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* to the monist philosophy of Śāṅkarācārya. The implications will be dealt with in chapter 5.

³ A short overview can be found in: Susmita Pande, *Medieval Bhakti Movement* (Meerut, 1989). A collection of articles on the *bhakti* movements across India is available in: N. N. Bhattacharya (Ed.) *Medieval Bhakti Movements in India* (New Delhi, 1999). *Bhakti* from the *Vaiṣṇava* point of view is dealt with exhaustively in: Raghu Nath Sharma, *Bhakti in the Vaiṣṇava Rasa-śāstra* (Delhi, 1996).

⁴ An expression sometimes used, 'late medieval *bhakti* movements', is a slight misnomer. First of all, the medieval phase in its strict historical sense is a concept to describe the cultural, economic and political development in Europe, having not much relation to or influence on the happenings in Asia. Nor does its ending date, 1486, have any bearing on the history of India. Western historians of India, considering these facts, usually avoid using the term 'medieval' in their accounts of the *bhakti* movements, while the native Indian historians – perhaps not so acutely aware of the difficulty involved in the term – use it rather broadly even up to the break-up of the Moghul era. The term 'late medieval' has come to be used even for *bhakti* movements of the 16th and 17th century, although the addition of the word 'late' then excludes the *bhakti* revivals happening much earlier. In the article they will be referred to specifically, to avoid the common grouping under a problematic title.

many of the revivals who relate closely to their so-called mythical past. While it is hard to know the full details of the history long gone, it is by now clear that numerous historical facts have remained covered or neglected due to Western bias in the treatment of Indian history.⁵ Therefore, while the medieval phase of the history of the *bhakti* movement is certainly remarkable, it should not be cut away from the more distant past beyond necessity, especially not from its ancient scriptural basis.

c) Bhakti in the Sanskrit Sources

The Bhagavad-gītā

The basic text dealing with the doctrine of *bhakti* is, by both scholarly and popular consensus, the *Bhagavad-gītā* or the 'Song of God', the Bible of the Hindus as it were. It is a relatively short, but most significant part of the great Hindu epic *Mahābhārata*, where Lord Kṛṣṇa, the eighth incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, himself synthesises the many strands of spirituality latent within early Hindu scriptures. The *Gītā* is also named the *Gītāpaniṣad*, or the conclusion of all the mystical texts called the *Upaniṣads*.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* is narrated in eighteen chapters. Most of the later theological commentaries on the *Gītā* agree that, for the sake of convenience, it can broadly be divided into three consequent parts, six chapters in each part. The middle six chapters deal with *bhakti-yoga*, the *yoga* of devotion, in a most direct way, although the concept is present throughout the text. The first six chapters mostly describe the preliminary path of *karma-yoga*, or the *yoga* of action, and the last six chapters deal with *jñāna-yoga*, the *yoga* of spiritual knowledge, discrimination, philosophical inquiry. Both *karma* and *jñāna* are considered helpful, preliminary and auxiliary to *bhakti*, but have little independent importance without it. In fact, exactly the addition of *bhakti* elevates the paths of *karma* and *jñāna* to the level of *yoga*, or the path of linking oneself with the Supreme Lord. The Sanskrit word *yoga*, meaning a link, is in that sense similar to the Latin verb *re-ligare*, to reunite, from which the current term religion is derived.

Let us begin with an overview of the specific verses that define the notion of *bhakti*, in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own words. In the last, eighteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa makes one of the most direct statements:

⁵ Native attempts at recovering the past are, for example, an exhaustive, peculiar work (which sorely lacks referencing though) of: Prakashanand Saraswati, *The True History and the Religion of India* (New Delhi, 1999). A similar work, but from within the academia, about the often discussed 'lack of historical sense' in ancient India and Hinduism, has been written by Arvind Sharma, *Hinduism and Its Sense of History* (New Delhi, 2003).

*bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram*

One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Lord, only by *bhakti* (by serving Me with devotion). And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18. 55)⁶

The final and the most important verses of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, describing the process of devotional surrender to God, conclude the eighteenth chapter:

*sarva-guhyatamaṁ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ
iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam
man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṁ te pratijāne priyo 'si me
arva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

Because you are My very dear friend, I am speaking to you My supreme instruction, the most confidential knowledge of all. Hear this from Me, for it is for your benefit. Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are very dear to Me. Abandon all varieties of *dharma* and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sin. Do not fear. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18. 64-66)⁷

It should be noted here that in the absence of an exactly corresponding English word, the famous Sanskrit term *dharma* is often left untranslated. If it is translated, words that come nearest to the original meaning would be *religion* or *duty*. In the particular verse quoted above, *dharma* can mean both – i.e. either the inferior kind of religious practice which does not have a clear spiritual purpose, or the varieties of

⁶ The translations I use are from the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (in its electronic version prepared by the Bhaktivedanta Archives, Vedabase 2003.1), whose work is traditionally accurate from the *bhakti* point of view. In case some less known phrases or thought formations appear in his translation, I have simplified them for the sake of easier understanding.

I retain the use of capital letters for words denoting divinity, i.e. God, Supreme Lord, and personal pronouns related to it (but not in the case of the demigods). My justification is that a religious tradition should be allowed to present itself in a full, confident way, without being watered down by so-called objectivity and ice-cold faithlessness.

⁷ This is a classical example of the indispensability of *sampradāyik* explanations of the *Gītā*. According to their developed theology and sacred cosmology, the *Vaiṣṇavas* choose to understand the word *viśate* 'enters' in its personalized, localized sense, meaning 'one enters the supreme abode of the Lord', not leaving the lonely word at the mercy of explanations opposed to the overall tenor of the *sampradāya*, thus ignoring the numerous scriptural passages about the kind of perfection desirable to a *Vaiṣṇava* devotee.

worldly duties related to family, society, nation and so on. Both of these are here declared to be inferior to the spirit of *bhakti*, direct focus on God and worship of Him in surrender. Such explanations of this particular verse seem to put the path of *bhakti* above ordinary traditional religious denominations, and curiously, even above Hinduism itself. The term Hinduism will be dealt with briefly in the later part of the introduction.

The fifteenth chapter, entitled '*Puruṣottama-yoga*', or the *yoga* of linking oneself with the Supreme Person, summarizes *bhakti* in the following verse:

*nirmāna-mohā jita-saṅga-doṣā
adhyātma-nityā vinivṛtta-kāmāḥ
dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha-samjñair
gacchanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayam tat*

Those who are free of pride, illusion and faulty association, who understand the eternal, who are done with material lust, who are freed from the dualities of happiness and distress, and who, unbewildered, know how to surrender unto the Supreme Person attain to that eternal kingdom. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 15. 5)

Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti

The *Bhagavad-gītā* has often been interpreted in a number of ways and by persons of numerous spiritual persuasions – after all it does give an overview of most of the Hindu spiritual practices. Nevertheless, its emphasis on *bhakti* is hard to miss. In a traditional allegory, goddess *Bhakti Devī* is the female personification of devotion. *Jñāna* (spiritual intuition, discrimination) and *Vairāgya* (detachment from material possessions or achievements) are her two sons, indicating how the two depend on her. The same hierarchy is noticeable in the *Bhagavad-gītā* itself as well, where the other less potent social, religious or spiritual practices are held to be inferior and only auxiliary to *bhakti*.

It is interesting to note how useful the trilogy *karma-jñāna-bhakti* can be in assessing the predominant mode in the varieties of theory and practice within any religious system.⁸ In its strictly Hindu sense, *karma* denotes traditional piety and moral propriety, following God's laws with a view of attaining the reward; in the case

⁸ For these parallels I am indebted to an article on the subject by William Deadwyler, "Religion and Religions", published in the *ISKCON Communications Journal* No. 1.1, January-June 1993. The article is based on the author's lecture delivered at the *Conference on Religious Education for Dialogue* at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, April 1989.

of a pious Hindu, the heaven.⁹ Specifically, it is related to the system of *yajña* or sacrifice, described in the *Vedas*, directed at pleasing the various demigods, controllers of various functions of the universe (Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, etc.). In this sense, *bhakti* is an antithesis to *karma*, much the way the strict monotheism of Christianity or Islam denigrates the various kinds of idolatry of the spiritually uneducated masses. But in Hinduism, the level of *karma* is included in the whole picture of approved religious practice, recognizing the various levels of people's understanding, and acknowledging the purifying effect of even the lowest level of religious practice for the sake of the gradual progress of mankind. But even if such a permissive attitude is agreeable to the majority of Hindus, the *bhakti* movements at least are very clear in considering it a lower stage, in accordance with the words of the *Bhagavad-gītā*¹⁰. The relation between *karma* and *bhakti* can also be seen in the desire of either Christian, Islamic, Buddhist or Hindu mystics, monks or recluses to delve deeper and more exclusively into their spiritual practice, and into a tangible relationship with God or the previous saints of their tradition – a desire which is often less strong among the less committed laity.

The level of *jñāna* is declared to be higher than *karma*, and is again in a sense its antithesis. It moves away from the world of enjoyment and seeks to attain a glimpse of the Absolute by the process of philosophical negation. The path of *jñāna* is attractive to the temper of intellectuals and renunciants, and its Hindu variety is mostly known to the world through the works of the ninth-century philosopher Śaṅkarācārya (788-820). His explanations of the classical mystical texts, the *Upaniṣads*, and the *Vedānta-sūtra*, have sought to subordinate the personality of God to its abstract power, to the mere 'Absoluteness' of the Absolute Person. His is an interesting twist in thought with many consequences pertinent to our theme. We will return to the details of his philosophy later.

The spirit of *jñāna* can be noticed in other religious systems as well, though perhaps its relation to other elements is not so pronounced and clear-cut. For

⁹ It should be noted here that the word *karma* in Sanskrit simply means action, or activity, or in its more particular sense, it means religious or pious acts leading one to heaven. It should not be confused with the meaning the word *karma* has obtained in Western 'spiritually enlightened' circles under the influence of Hindu philosophy, namely, *karma* as one's fate, "Whatever happened to me was my *karma*."

¹⁰ Cf. the following verses: Men of small knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the *Vedas*, which recommend various religious activities for elevation to heaven, resultant good birth, power, and so on. Being desirous of opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.42-43).

Later on in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that those who worship lesser gods subordinate to Him attain the worlds of these gods (i.e. the impermanent Hindu heaven), but those who worship Him exclusively with devotion, *bhakti*, attain His spiritual abode to live with Him forever. He is nevertheless kind to those on the lower levels, stating that He himself supplies them the necessary faith in worshipping the lesser gods, and that actually He is the one from whom they ultimately receive their rewards. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7. 20-23).

example, Lord Buddha was opposed to the theism of the Vedic tradition, and many Buddhist traditions of later times are extremely philosophical, entering a dialogue not so much with their theistic opponents but moving the argument into the sphere of logic and ontology. At least as far as the Vedic path of *karma* goes, the Buddhist philosopher and the Hindu *jñānī* both agree about its weaknesses. The mystics in Christianity and the Sufis of Islam also have a noticeable admixture of *jñāna* in their otherwise largely devotional practice. Offhand examples would be the mystic unity with God in the philosophy of Meister Eckhart (1260-1329) or John of Ruysbroeck (1293-1381)¹¹. The Sufi poet Mansūr Al-Hallāj (858-922) took the path of *jñāna* up to its most extreme expression, the deification of the self. While that proclamation did not gain theological approval within Islam, it does have a place within Hinduism, although such philosophical presumptions of complete unity with God usually do not get along well with the spirit of pure devotion to God.¹²

In Christian mysticism, Sufism, and later on in Kabīr, we meet with a concept that one can love God and surrender to Him even while not entering a fully personalized relationship with Him, at least not the kind that the medieval Hindu *bhakti* movements usually advocate. Before the appearance of *nirguṇa-bhakti*, the thinking of Indian theologians was limited to the two possible lines of theory and practice: either *jñāna*, or *bhakti*. Both are mentioned as valid in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and they are juxtaposed in its twelfth chapter. Kabīr, not busying himself with precise theological discussions but following his own heart, seems to have been trying to get the best out of both paths. We will return to his ideas later, let us now consider the two traditional options.

In the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa compares the two opposing ways of approaching transcendence. First is the impersonal, negative path of *jñāna*, of forcefully renouncing matter, searching for the spirit in oneself and attempting to merge, as it were, in the Supreme Spirit. The second is the personal devotional path of *bhakti*, of seeking to understand both matter and spirit in relation to the Supreme Lord, and establishing a relation to Him in devotion. Of the two, the second is considered easier, and superior. The often-heard over-simplification is that *bhakti* is more suitable only to the sentimental, exceedingly emotional characters who do not have a predilection or even the ability for cultivating abstract philosophy. What the *Bhagavad-gītā* says is deeper, it argues that an emotional response to the personality of the Lord and a devotional bond with Him is a more mature and a more stable spiritual position, and that success in *bhakti* is achieved more easily since every soul

¹¹ Evelyn Underhill, *The Essentials of Mysticism* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 12, 32, 112

¹² Some three hundred years after Al-Hallāj (who was persecuted for heresy), another Sufi saint, Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmī (1207-1273) defended the insights of his predecessor, saying that those who say they are servants of God are actually presumptuous, for they retain their own ego, and those who say "There is nothing else but God" are actually the most humble – they sacrifice their ego completely and become one with the Lord. The point is taken from: Coleman Barks, *The Essential Rumi* (New York, 1996), p. 129.

longs for an eternal reciprocation with the Divine Person. In the first practice, *jñāna*, one depends on one's own endeavor, while in the second, *bhakti*, one can rely on the Divine Grace of God.

Arjuna inquired: Which are considered to be more perfect, those who are always properly engaged in Your worship with devotion, or those who worship the impersonal Brahman, the unmanifested? The Supreme Lord said: Those who focus their minds on My personal form and are always engaged in worshiping Me with great faith are considered by Me to be the most perfect. For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied. But those who worship Me, giving up all their activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating on Me, having focused their minds upon Me, o Arjuna, for them I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 12. 1, 2, 5-7)

Moving up on the ladder *karma-jñāna-bhakti*, we conclude with *bhakti* as a category which includes the previous two and adds a devotional aspect to them. If *karma* had been declared to be this-worldly, not aiming at the Supreme, in conjunction with *bhakti* it becomes '*karma-yoga*', or a way of approaching the Supreme through one's actions in this world. And dry *jñāna*, mere abstract philosophy and negation of this world, becomes useful to a transcendentalist when he employs it to disentangle himself from this world and tries to attach himself to the Lord. In conjunction with *bhakti*, *jñāna* becomes '*jñāna-yoga*', and it stabilizes the devotional endeavor with mature detachment and an analytical understanding of the relation of this world to the Lord. The three concepts of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* ultimately assist one another in an integrated progress towards devotional perfection.

Sometimes, the advocates of the highest form of *bhakti* demand from their students a complete turning away from both *karma* and *jñāna*, or at least their lower, selfishly motivated kind. *Bhakti* can be seen as both a synthesis and a sublimation of *karma* and *jñāna*, and on a higher level a complete antithesis to them, since real, pure *bhakti* means to renounce one's own self-centered will and to subordinate it to the will of the Lord.

The points of the *Bhagavad-gītā* are echoed further in the most famous among the eighteen *Purāṇas*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.¹³

¹³ I stubbornly avoid any discussion on the chronology of the *Purāṇas* because such an issue can only come up if we completely disregard the innumerable traditional accounts of their origin. The concern of later interpolations is sometimes valid, but before any definite proofs are produced we should be careful to keep the veracity of the *śāstras* intact. The different genres seem to have had different histories, and at least as far as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is concerned, I never heard of a valid account of interpolations, late origin, authorship other than that of Vedavyāsa, etc.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa

This long composition on the glory of devotion records a conversation between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His minister and cousin Uddhava, who is known to have been extremely receptive and spiritually evolved. They discuss many issues only hinted at in the much shorter *Bhagavad-gītā*, and the message of the superiority of *bhakti* is again clearly pronounced.

na sādhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharma uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā

Dear Uddhava, only strong loving devotion can make Me subordinate to a devotee engaged in My worship. I cannot be controlled by persons engaged in yoga, metaphysical philosophy, pious work, study of the sacred scriptures, asceticism or renunciation. (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 11. 14. 20)¹⁴

A vast majority of the *bhakti* movements builds their philosophy and practice on these two scriptures, namely the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is important in terms of how the *bhakti* movements understand the relation of their preferred scriptures to the other parts of the Vedic corpus. The *Purāṇa* begins with an introduction of how it came into being. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, its author, the literary incarnation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is portrayed as despairing over his role as the spiritual educator of the masses. After compiling the four *Vedas* and the *Mahābhārata*, and elaborating on the four Vedic goals of life¹⁵, he is pictured as sitting despondently in his *āśrama*, lost in thought. His *guru*, Nārada Muni, arrives and urges him to give the world what it really needs – a description of the glories of the Supreme Lord, and the path of loving devotion to Him. Having been propelled by Nārada, Vyāsadeva composes the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* which indeed abounds in descriptions of *bhakti* to Lord Viṣṇu in His many incarnations, examples being too numerous to mention here. The *Purāṇa* begins with a definition of *para dharma*, highest duty or religion:

sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā yayātmā suprasīdati

¹⁴ I use the translation of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (Bhaktivedanta Vedabase 2003.1) since it is by far the most comprehensive of all available English translations. The Sanskrit text is fairly fixed so that the Sanskrit version of the Gita Press does not differ substantially at all from the text which I am working with.

¹⁵ The four goals of life or *puṁsārthas* in Hinduism are *dharma* (religiosity), *artha* (economic development), *kāma* (enjoyment) and *mokṣa* (liberation). Some authors include *bhakti* or *prema*, devotion to God, in the scheme of the four, either subsuming it under *dharma* or *mokṣa*, while it is most often understood as standing above the four as the fifth, last *puṁsārtha*.

The supreme occupation (*para dharma*) for all humanity is that by which men can attain loving devotion to the transcendent Lord. Serving God in such devotional spirit must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self. (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 1. 2. 6)¹⁶

Definitions of Bhakti

Two separate compendiums of *sūtras* or short aphorisms about *bhakti* are available to us today. One is the work of the sage Nārada, the other of Śāṇḍilya¹⁷. The two sages are often mentioned in the Vedic literature, mostly in the *Purāṇas*. Of the two especially Nārada is well known to the Hindu mind as an ideal of a devotional mystic. The *Śāṇḍilya-bhakti-sūtra* opens with a definition of *bhakti*:

sā parānuraktir īśvare

Bhakti is an absolute attachment to God. (*ŚBS, sūtra 2*)¹⁸

The *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* also begins with a definition of *bhakti*:

sā parama-prema-rūpā

Bhakti is the highest form of love towards God. (*NBS, sūtra 2*)¹⁹

In the second chapter of the *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, its author cites a few other definitions by respected ancient sages, and adds his own at the end:

Sage Vyāsa is of the opinion that *bhakti* is an attraction for worshipping the Lord. Sage Garga considers *bhakti* to be a fondness for hearing about the Lord's glories. The wise Śāṇḍilya opines that *bhakti* results when one removes all obstacles from taking pleasure in the Supreme Self. And Nārada defines *bhakti* as an inclination for offering all of one's activities to the Lord, and experiencing extreme distress in not being connected to Him. (*NBS, sūtras 16-19*)²⁰

A multi-faceted philosopher Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (1490-1540), author of a theological treatise *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana* (The Elixir of Devotion to the Lord), defines *bhakti* in the following way:

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁷ Here again, these sages of old desist any chronologization.

¹⁸ Acharya Baladeva Upadhyaya, *Śāṇḍilya-bhakti-sūtram Bhakti-candrikayā samanvitam* (Varanasi, 1998), p. 4.

¹⁹ The *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* is also included in the abovementioned publication, p. 75.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

drute citte praviṣṭā yā govindākāratā sthirā bhaktir ity abhihitā

Bhakti is a steady recollection of God's form imprinted into one's melted heart.
(*Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*, 2. 1)²¹

The mystic saint Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1533) who started a wildfire of *bhakti* revivalism in the sixteenth-century Bengal left behind him only eight verses on the glory of devotion. He handed the responsibility of writing a theological basis of his path of *bhakti* to his talented disciples, of whom Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (1489-1564) is most well-known. The venerable Gosvāmī resided in Vṛndāvana, Lord Kṛṣṇa's home village on the bank of the river Yamunā, and was contemporary to many of the well-known *bhakti* poets of the sixteenth century – Vallabhācārya (1479-1531), Mīrā Bāī (1498-1547), Sūradāsa (1483-1563), to name a few – who collectively effected the full-swing revival of the places of Lord Kṛṣṇa's early life. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's work, the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (The Ocean of the Nectar of Devotion), remains unrivalled among textbooks of devotional philosophy and practice. It starts with a definition of *bhakti*:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu- śīlanam bhaktir uttamā
kleśa-ghnī śubhadā mokṣa- laghutā-kṛt sudurlabhā
sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā*

The highest form of *bhakti* is devoid of selfishness, and is never covered by speculative *jñāna* or ritualistic *karma*. *Bhakti* means to favorably serve and worship the Lord. Such *bhakti* wipes away all suffering, bestows all auspiciousness, it surpasses mere salvation, and it is extremely rare. It consists of concentrated bliss and it attracts the Lord.
(*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1. 1. 16-17)

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes the advancement on the path of *bhakti* in three consecutive stages. The first, practicing stage is called *sādhana-bhakti*, the second stage where the bud of love of God begins to grow is called *bhāva-bhakti*, and the last, perfected stage of devotion in full bloom is called *prema-bhakti*. All of them are termed *bhakti* since Rūpa Gosvāmī's point is that devotion to the Lord, even in its immature stage, is nevertheless extraordinary and not of this world, and some more practice will make it perfect. Rūpa Gosvāmī commenced the tradition of manuals on devotional practice which attempt to describe the progress on the path of *bhakti* in minute details. Such literature is often similar to the works of Christian or Islamic mystics who made notes of their inner development. Some scholars have highlighted correlations between Christian mysticism and the stress of the *bhakti* school on a

²¹ I work with a Hindi translation, Janardan Shastri Pandey, Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī viracitam Śrī Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyanam (Varanasi, 1998), p. 130.

loving relationship with God, beyond awe and reverence. St. Bernard (1090-1153) wrote:

Love receives its name from loving, not from honoring. Let one who is struck with dread, with astonishment, with fear, with admiration, rest satisfied with honoring, but all these feelings are absent in him who loves. Love is filled with itself, and where love has come it overcomes and transforms all other feelings. Wherefore the soul that loves, loves, and knows nought else. He who justly deserves to be honored, justly deserves to be admitted and wondered at, yet He loves rather to be loved.²²

d) Bhakti Understood by Members of Other Religions

While the devotional philosophy of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other ancient Sanskrit scriptures may strike a familiar chord in practitioners of other monotheistic religions, the fact remains that the similarities are often clouded by the considerable amount of 'otherness' that Hinduism represents to any Western observer.

One point often misunderstood by Westerners who study the ancient Indian philosophical works is the relation between the immanence and transcendence of God. Early Western scholars of the Sanskrit scriptures, especially the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the mystical *Upaniṣads*, came across expressions of God's presence in every part of His creation. Being familiar with Western ideas of pantheism, they have considered these passages inconsistent with the theism expressed in these same works, and have gone even as far as considering them interpolations.²³ The simultaneous immanence and transcendence of God is often reiterated in the Vedic scriptures²⁴, and is strictly speaking not pantheism, since God forever retains His transcendent existence above the creation, untouched by it. Such misunderstandings are cleared when we study the Vedic texts without preconceived notions.²⁵

²² Quoted in an article by Bimanbehari Majumdar, "Religion of Love: The Early Medieval Phase", in: N. N. Bhattacharya (Ed.), *Medieval Bhakti Movements in India* (New Delhi, 1999), pp. 6-7.

²³ The issue was first documented in: R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, and Minor Religious Systems* (New Delhi, 2001, which is a reprint of the German encyclopedia *Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, Vol. 3, part 6, published in Strassburg 1913.), pp. 157-161.

²⁴ The term Vedic is used here in its broadest sense, not at all limited to the four *Vedas*, although traditionally the *Vedas* are perceived as the most ancient, hallowed part of the canon. If perhaps a bit less relevant today, they nevertheless remain within the inclusive philosophical world of *bhakti*.

²⁵ Cf. the verses in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 9. 4-5: By Me, in My unmanifested form, the entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them. And yet everything that is created does not rest in Me. Behold My mystic opulence! Although I am the maintainer of all living entities and although I am everywhere, I am not a part of this cosmic manifestation, for My self is the very source of creation.

The appreciation of interreligious similarities is restricted because of the fairly reasonable, chaste aversion on all sides to simplified eclecticism or 'jumping over the fences'.²⁶ Nevertheless, common ground is most easily found in the sphere of praxis, since even the groups within Hinduism possessing contesting philosophies and theoretical bases are seen using very similar practical devotional techniques. The affinities stretch to other non-Hindu religious groups within India like Jainism and Buddhism, and extend to Christianity and Islam as well, especially their overtly devotional strands like the Christian mysticism and the movement of the Sufis.

Since the resurgence of *bhakti* seemed to coincide with the arrival of Sufi mystics to India, there was an early period of conviction that the Sufi influence has been instrumental in the shaping of the philosophy of *bhakti*. However, the relations between the two faiths were rather limited, and such arguments are now dismissed on the basis of the undeniable antiquity of the Sanskrit scriptures which form the basis of the Hindu philosophy of *bhakti*. The Western indological scholars have initially been impressed with the level of correlations in the devotional theology and practice that exist between the *bhakti* movements and Christianity, and have often proposed the influence of early Nestorian Christian preachers in India on the formation of devotional Hinduism. Some have studied the similarities in the lives of Jesus Christ and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, concluding that the myth of Lord Kṛṣṇa was a borrowing of Christian ideas. Such guesses were dismissed with considerable disappointment only when the cross-textual examination moved the chronology of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Sanskrit scriptures into pre-Christian times.²⁷

By the influence of Islam, the movement of the *sants* turned away from the definite positive imagery of God and moved the concept of *bhakti* into a more abstract direction. Kabīr is the most outstanding representative of the stream of so-called *nirguṇa-bhakti*, a concept often misunderstood since it defies traditional categorization and set standards of thinking within the Hindu philosophical framework.²⁸

An often repeated, and just as often unsuccessful, attempt was to classify Indian *bhakti* traditions into neat drawers of theological concepts – concepts which arose in

²⁶ For example, the *bhakti* movements recognize the concept of *anyāśraya-doṣa*, or 'the fault of taking shelter outside one's own religious tradition'. Merely acknowledging cross-cultural similarities as a way of enhancing mutual respect is probably not included in that category. Whatever the case, a few semi-scholarly works by religious practitioners that aim at cross-referencing Hinduism and their own, usually Christian background do meet with appreciation at least in India, if not also within their own circles. Examples to note are the works of Reverend Camille Bulcke (1909-1982), a Christian missionary of Belgian origin who worked in Allahabad, and contributed vastly to the native field of *Rāmāyaṇa* studies, and Sister Vandana's work, *Nāma Japa – Prayer of the Name in the Hindu and Christian Traditions* (New Delhi, 1997).

²⁷ N. N. Bhattacharya, *Indian Religious Historiography*, Vol. 1, (New Delhi, 1996), pp. 273-75.

²⁸ A strong argument to include the *nirguṇa-bhakti* in the spectrum of *bhakti* movements is presented by Mrs. Krishna Sharma in her work *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement – A New Perspective* (New Delhi, Second Ed. 2002)

the theologies of faiths which were, true, often surprisingly similar in many respects to the *bhakti* movement, but which nevertheless do not seem fully equipped for handling the realities of Hinduism. Thus, while Christian and Islamic theology would pride itself on its insistence on strict monotheism, Hinduism had always been that Big, indefinable Brother, the permissiveness of which regarding the worship of its many divinities was often understood to go against the core belief in the One Almighty Lord. Scholars argue that the term *monotheism* is a Western concept that has grown out of the Christian and Islamic worldview, and have proposed a term *monolatry* (worship of one God as Supreme among many other lesser divinities), or *monotheistic polymorphism* (the worship of one God in His many incarnations) as more fitting to the situation within Hinduism.²⁹

These terms are an upgrading or a refinement of the old term *henotheism*, an expression coined by Friedrich Max Müller, one of the most influential Western indologists, during his study of the Vedic texts. Henotheism, according to him, as documented in the Vedic hymns, is understood as a convenient belief in a divinity singled out usually for the immediate purpose of the Vedic sacrifice, without disclaiming other existing divinities. The level of henotheism according to Müller is halfway between polytheism and pure monotheism, and here again we are struggling to understand the Hindu situation with Western, anthropological glasses of a linear development from primitive polytheism towards the refined monotheism of the Christian kind. While the idea of such a gradual advancement through stages of religiosity does not do justice to Hinduism, the term *henotheism* itself also does not carry the nuance of meaning appropriate in the context of the *bhakti* movements. The gods of the Vedic sacrifices do not have much relation to the strictly theistic movements within Hinduism. The simple fact is that many Hindu *bhakti* movements are just as adamantly opposed to admitting any second divinity onto the pedestal of the Supreme Lord as the Christians or Muslims could be, while nevertheless leaving other people at rest with their other choices. The philosophy of *bhakti*, rather than dismissing the 'competing lesser divinities' as dangerous threats to the full overlordship of the Supreme, includes them in the picture and gives them all due respect, although it does insist that the best worship of all the parts of creation is accomplished by a focused service to the Supreme Lord, the root of all that be. The so-called 'Hindu pantheon' with its many *devatās*³⁰ could actually imply a very wholesome understanding of the universe, the Supreme Lord as its Highest creator,

²⁹ Steven Rosen, *Essential Hinduism* (Westport, Connecticut, 2006), p. 24

³⁰ The Sanskrit term *devatā* has often been translated as 'god' (allowed in plural as well, i.e. 'the gods'), although in the strictly monotheistic strands of Hinduism the subordinate status of these divinities is often indicated by the prefix *demi-*, (i.e. demigod or half-god). The notion of demigods then stands in opposition or subordination to the One God with a capital letter. The resultant plurality of 'gods' troubles some scholars who propose words like 'angel' instead, which is again inadequate since the Sanskrit notions of *apsarā*, *gandharva*, *kinnara* or *cārana* are already understood to be covering the space of the English word angel.

maintainer and destroyer, with many helping hands who may receive some credit on their own. In treating such matters where the risk of distortion is high because of the particularities of the Western religious past and set modes of thinking, it seems wise to give voice to the native emic scholars and practitioners.

For a proper assessment of the *bhakti* movement, we need to digress for a moment and clear the confusion around the term Hinduism. Its meaning is related to the complicated history of indological studies in the West.

e) Hinduism and the History of Indology

Any encyclopedic entry on the term *Hinduism* usually begins with its etymology. The word is never used in the native Sanskrit works, it is a much later derivative from the word *Sindhu*, which is a Sanskrit word for the river Indus. The Arabic invaders, we are told, have coined the word as meaning 'that land which is beyond the river *Sindhu*', while *Sindhu* was incorrectly pronounced as *Hindu*. In the Arabic world, it came to designate the people of India, and a later addition of the suffix *-ism* was an effective move to cram together the Indian religious and social customs all in one term.

The Hindus themselves prefer the term *sanātana-dharma* (eternal duty, eternal religion) as an expression to cover their religious persuasion *and* social duties, and argue that *dharma* as a term is not limited by religious denomination but is an all-encompassing universal term to describe the duties of man in relation to the Divine. It is however true that the Hindu philosophies revolving around the details of what exactly, or rather who, that Divine is, are varied and even diametrically opposed to each other. After two hundred years of indological studies, it is imperative that the whole spectrum of Hindu philosophies and practices receives a fair share of scholarly attention.

The Hindu Canon

A matter closely related to the whole field of indological studies is: which scriptures in the vast treasury of Sanskrit literature are taken to be normative, as representing the 'true' spirit of Hinduism. Indology as a branch of the Western academic pursuit was shaped in the era of British supremacy in India, and was often an expression of social and religious prejudice and superiority. The foreign scholars were the ones dictating the direction of research and the evaluation of the Indian literary legacy.

Early Orientalist scholars working within India, such as William Jones or Henry Colebrooke, constructed a golden age of Hinduism located deep in the past and fashioned a portrayal of the Vedic age that is still widely accepted in the West today. Colebrook published an extremely influential article titled *On the Vedas, or sacred Writings of the Hindus*, in which he advanced his far-reaching notion that the *Vedas* – by which he primarily means the *Upaniṣads* – are the authentic, genuine Hindu scriptures and that the goal of liberation from the world, or *mokṣa*, is the ‘real doctrine of the whole Indian scripture’. He was also one of the first to identify Śaṅkara as the great and authentic commentator on the *Vedas*. In this same article, Colebrooke condemns the theistic cults of Hinduism – as well as their scriptural sources, the *Purāṇas* – as inauthentic and deserving of being ‘rejected, as liable to much suspicion’.³¹

Another issue is the chronological sequence of the ancient Sanskrit texts. The usual way in which the Western scholars enumerate them is in an order of chronological succession, despite the traditional claims that the Vedic literature is a set corpus of interrelated texts that did not grow to become ‘refined’ through time.³²

³¹ I quote from a lively book, David L. Haberman, *River of Love in an Age of Pollution* (Berkeley, 2006), pp. 25-26. The author goes on to argue that this move of the Orientalists was also politically useful, for by denying authenticity to the many *bhakti* sects across the country which had considerable social and political strength at the time, and by relegating all importance to a distant past of abstract philosophy and an escape from the world, the British have in effect made it easy for themselves to assume the role of order-making politicians in India.

³² The first Western indologists have often portrayed the *Vedas* as simplistic and childish texts, and even knowingly mistranslated them to make the *Vedas* appear primitive. The antiquity assigned to the *Vedas* was never in line with traditional Hindu understanding, but calculated to fit the current notions of the age of the human race according to the history in the Bible. One of the most candid accounts of the history of indology can be found in: Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami, *Readings in Vedic Literature – The Tradition Speaks for Itself* (Los Angeles, 1985). A related issue is that of the indigenous nature of Indian culture, as opposed to early Orientalist ideas about the Aryan homeland outside India and their subsequent immigration. Slowly the native Indian scholars of indology, especially those in the diaspora, are becoming influential enough to reverse the old wrongs. I quote: “If one explores the history of the Aryan Invasion Theory, it becomes clear that it arose due to colonial-missionary prejudices. It was largely the brainchild of foreign conquerors, who could not imagine the ‘primitive’ Hindoos giving rise to such a complex and noteworthy culture. (...) A significant number of archaeologists, both Indian and Western, have insisted that there is no archaeological evidence to support the theory of external Indo-Aryan origins. And the *Vedas* themselves, written at a time when the invasions would have been fresh in people’s memories, do not mention anything resembling an invasion of India. Moreover, the philological and linguistic evidence that had originally been brought forward to support the theory of invasions has been called into question and reinterpreted. Respected scholars, such as B. B. Lal of the Archaeological Survey of India, and Edwin Bryant from Rutgers University, have shown that the Aryan Invasion Theory is based on rather flimsy evidence.” Steven Rosen, *Essential Hinduism* (Westport, Connecticut, 2006), pp. 10-11.

Only lately did the native Indian scholars stand up to the challenge and have listed the textual proofs of how the whole range of the Vedic texts – the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, the two epics, *Purāṇas*, *Vedānta*, and so on – forms a cohesive whole, and has been forming it ever since its origins.³³ The Western academic world in its beaten track rarely assents to the demands of such lonely *paṇḍitas* to be heard long after all has been said and done. But it is interesting to trace out the influences that have shaped the chronological ordering of the Vedic texts in the first place: the new-found fascination with the Darwinian explanation of the human past, and the nineteenth-century boom of anthropological work on the indigenous primitive tribes around the world must have had their share in the shaping of the idea. Another influence was that of the missionary zeal of the British Christians in colonial India.

Traditionally, all parts of the Vedic canon are put into place by the overarching *Vedānta* philosophy – which is not necessarily meta-theistic, as Śāṅkara's interpretation makes it. Another point is that traditionally, the religious histories or *Purāṇas* are designated as the 'fifth *Veda*' since they elaborate on the doctrines presented briefly in the Vedic *saṃhitās*. The *Purāṇas* are divided according to the three *guṇas*, an extremely useful concept for assessing the predominant mode of either persons or texts. The pious, sattvic *Purāṇas* meant for sattvic people recommend the worship of Viṣṇu and His incarnations, extolling the efficacy of the path of *bhakti*. The rajasic and tamasic *Purāṇas* recommend the worship of Brahmā, Śiva, Durgā or any of the other divinities of the Hindu pantheon. The worship of these lesser gods is often performed along the lines of the *Vaiṣṇava* practices, and in fact, many Śaiva *bhakti* movements are known across India, much akin to their *Vaiṣṇava* counterparts.³⁴ Nevertheless, the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* recommend Viṣṇu worship as the highest, and both of the great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, are *Vaiṣṇava* in character. To this day, two thirds of Hindus profess being of a *Vaiṣṇava* persuasion, and the Śivaites follow as the second largest group, while the worship of other Hindu divinities is usually occasion-oriented, and not so much a lifetime fidelity as in the *bhakti* movements.

The different parts of the Vedic canon are traditionally understood as progressive, not in a chronological sense but along the lines of human advancement through the phases of life; the principle of Vedic *yajña* useful in one's domestic life, and the *Upaniṣads*, *Āraṇyakas*, and *Vedānta* as the studying material of renunciants at the last stages of their life. The Vedic canon consists of different literary genres, and

³³ For example, K. Bhavadaj in his work *The Concept of Viṣṇu in the Purāṇas* (New Delhi, 1981) argues about the antiquity of the *Purāṇas* and supplies textual references about the eighteen *Purāṇas* in the so-called 'earlier works', the *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, *Upaniṣads*, and other *Smṛtis*. On pp. 9-13 of his work.

³⁴ A sketch of the Tamil Śaiva *bhakti* poets is available in: Karen Pechilis Prentiss, *The Embodiment of Bhakti* (New York – Oxford, 1999). Comparisons of Śaiva and Christian mysticism have been published by: Bettina Bäumer (Ed.), *Mysticism in Shaivism and Christianity* (New Delhi, 1997).

therefore, the *Vedas* are not an example of the 'primitive beginnings of Hindu philosophical thought', but books of litany that accompanied the Vedic sacrifices. The chronological sequencing of the Vedic texts has led to a fallacious search for the 'concept of *bhakti*' in the Vedic hymns, a curious attempt which is bound to be misleading to say the least, if not a failure right from the outset.³⁵

Traditionally, the path of *bhakti* had always been a separate option with its own justification. *Bhakti* cuts across caste, gender and age, and offers anyone a privilege of a direct bond with a personal Divinity. The major *bhakti* movements may have been flourishing in medieval times, but they all share the pan-Indian memory of the so-called mythical past, of the presence of their Deities on the Indian soil, and the cults of worship that have grown around them since those days long ago. If that memory is dismissed as a myth, and another myth – that made up by Darwin – is superimposed on the Vedic canon, we lose all that we might have been gaining by being interested in the Vedic texts.³⁶ By such mutilations of the traditional understanding, the Vedic path becomes religiously impotent, much like any other religious path when it is treated by an unsympathetic atheistic mind.

Indological studies to this day are full of examples of such unfair treatment. For example, A. A. Macdonell, an early English Sanskritist not very congenially disposed to traditional beliefs within Hinduism, has been a part of a scholarly tradition full of doubts about the authenticity and integrity of Sanskrit texts.

We are told in the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself that the poem was either recited by professional minstrels or sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, being handed down orally, in the first place by Rāma's two sons Kuśa and Lava. These names are nothing more than the inventions of popular etymology meant to explain the Sanskrit word *kuśilava* 'bard' or 'actor'. (...) Considerable time must have elapsed between the composition of the original poem and that of the additions. For the tribal hero of the former has in the latter been transformed into a national hero, the moral ideal of the people; and the human hero, (like Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata*) of the five genuine books (excepting a few interpolations) has in the first and last become deified and identified with the god Viṣṇu, his divine nature in these additions being always present to the minds of their authors. Here, too, Vālmīki, the composer of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, appears as a contemporary of Rāma, and is already regarded as a seer. A long interval of time must have been necessary for such transformations as these.³⁷

³⁵ For example, an article by Jeanine Miller, "Bhakti in the Rg Veda – Does It Appear There or Not?" in: Karel Werner (Ed.), *Love Divine – Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism* (Durham, 1993), pp. 1-36. Many overviews of the *bhakti* movement begin with the survey of the Vedic material, cf. Susmita Pande, *Birth of Bhakti in Indian Religions and Art* (New Delhi, 1982), or, Bhagavat Kumar Shastri, *The Bhakti Cult in Ancient India* (Varanasi, 3rd Ed. 2002).

³⁶ Extensive research on the topic of relations between Darwinism and the Vedic cosmogony has been done by Michael A. Cremo in his last work, *Human Devolution* (Badger, California, 2003). His work is provocative to such an extent that it generated a new expression in anthropological studies, *Vedic creationism*.

³⁷ Arthur A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi, 1997), p. 256.

It is interesting to note that these same persons, the early Sanskrit scholars, who could not relate to the divinity of Rāma, were not at all staunch atheists but often convinced practicing Christians, who could well detect the same kind of negligence and lack of respect in a speech if it was related to Lord Jesus, or if it questioned the integrity of the Bible. The same is true of Muslims who also do not tolerate embarrassing or offensive comments about their prophet, and about the Quran. Such double standards then, of being allowed to speak in a derogatory way about the Hindu religious personalities and scriptures, were enforced in an age when these two religious communities (Christian and Islamic) invested with political power ruled over India. This unfair pattern of harshness and lack of sympathy towards the indigenous religious works by the very persons who profess to study them and teach about them persists to this very day, although it is now clothed in the garb of academic objectivity.³⁸

This historical thread of partiality needs to be highlighted precisely when we talk about *bhakti*. Any religion maintains an aura of faith in the transcendent existence of God primarily through its scriptures. If the sacred scriptures of a dominated nation are dismissed as faulty and not worthy of the air of sacredness around them, by scholars of a dominant religion (who would not allow the same unfair trial to happen to their own religious belief), then the ground is not yet even enough for a fair interfaith dialogue. In the field of indology, the fairness did not come about so much by openly redressing the injustice, but by a fresh overflow of sympathetic phenomenological studies of Hinduism³⁹.

f) The Bhakti Movements – An Overview

Among the medieval *bhakti* movements, we come across different variations of the level of traditionalism, and a broad distinction is usually made between the stream of the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* and that of the so-called *sants*. These two branches of the *bhakti* revival can be studied from the point of their philosophical basis, and their social stances. While the four *Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas* or lineages of devotion to Viṣṇu tend to be orthodox and traditional in their acceptance of the Vedic social reality, the *sants – bhakti* poets less easily classified – tend to be satirists and social dissenters, bringing basic religious education to the masses. Since the philosophy of *bhakti* does afford place to all strata of the Indian society (and arguably even those

³⁸ This work of Macdonell has been published in London in 1900 and is now being reprinted in India itself again and again, by its greatest indological publisher.

³⁹ For example, Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Ed.), *Religions of India in Practice* (New Delhi, 1998), or works like John Stratton Hawley, *At Play With Krishna – Pilgrimage Dramas from Vrindavan* (Delhi, 1992). The spirit of faith and *bhakti* comes through in these works because the practitioners themselves are finally given a voice in the presentation of Hinduism.

from without) to take part in the practice of *bhakti*, varying degrees of application of such permissive scriptural statements have been noticed, as well as various interpretations of how the practitioners from the lower strata of society and those from the higher can interrelate.

I purposely avoid presenting the *bhakti* movements in stark opposition to the orthodox Hindu *brāhmaṇical* culture since – as often as that is done – it is often too simplistic. Neither are all *bhakti* movements reactionary upheavals of lower classes clashing with the hegemony of the privileged castes, nor is the orthodox brahmanical culture as indifferent and as resistant to the appeal of the philosophy of *bhakti* as some would like us to believe. The nuances of this issue and the dilemmas which were being tackled by the orthodox Hindu society prompted by the *bhakti* movements will be outlined below.

In terms of consequences for the Indian society, the *bhakti* movements are similar to the protestant movement in Europe. They gave rise to vernacular religious poetry which was previously kept within the confines of Sanskrit. The vernaculars – Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, Hindi, Brajbhasha, Maithili, Avadhi, Marathi, Gujarati – became systematized and gained new respectability associated with the noble themes they conveyed. New literary genres and forms of prosody came into being; it was an Indian renaissance of self-assertion in the face of foreign rule, and a moment of renewed confidence in the redeeming strength of the Hindu *dharma*, its ideals, heroes and philosophy.

The *bhakti* movements in their organizational frame usually correspond to the monastic orders and mystic strands within other religions, and the connections have often been highlighted. The stray intuitive poets of the *bhakti* movement who may not have been members of any monastic order, have been an inspiration and an influence beyond their own circle, and their fame is often pan-Indian, stretching across the few distinguishing characteristics of each particular *bhakti* movement. But while openly favoring renunciation and asceticism as valid and even indispensable in the quest for a mystical bond with God, the *bhakti* movements do offer a variety of levels of commitment to their practitioners, while a few among them may even openly favor domestic environments and censor the ascetic monopolies on *bhakti*.

Strictly speaking, *bhakti* most often used to refer to *Viṣṇu-bhakti*, devotion to Viṣṇu or any of His incarnations (most often Kṛṣṇa and Rāma). It was also the first to be noticed and studied by the British indologists. Since the first British outpost was Calcutta, they soon became familiar with Bengal *Vaiṣṇavism*, a *bhakti* movement started by the saint Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The second great movement they came to notice was Ācārya Rāmānuja's branch of *Vaiṣṇavism* in the Tamil land. As the studies of Hinduism progressed, it became obvious that practically speaking every Hindu denomination possessed its own canon of scriptures and a full philosophy of *bhakti* revolving around that particular divinity. This can be confusing to those who are not familiar with the broadness of Hinduism.

Another influence that shaped the state of affairs was that of Śaṅkara's *advaita* philosophy (monism), at the core of which is the belief that ultimately the Supreme is formless (*nirguṇa* in Sanskrit), but that it can be perceived as having form (*saguṇa*) on the lower level of worship and meditation. *Bhakti* thus became a concept and a practice freely used by anyone who felt it was expedient enough (although strictly speaking the idea of any kind of worldly profit is foreign to pure *bhakti*), and was connected to almost any divinity of the Hindu pantheon (although strictly speaking pure *bhakti* did not encourage diffusing one's attention to many divinities). Consequently, in the broadening of its appeal so common in many established religions, some of the otherworldliness, exclusivity and transcendent fervor of the original idea of *bhakti* may have been compromised.

Although the *bhakti* movements are usually associated with the medieval period, there is no conclusive evidence about the state of affairs before these well-known and documented movements. For example, Indian historians Suvira Jaiswal and S. C. Mukherji notice in their surveys of Indian iconographic and epigraphic material that *Vaiṣṇavism* has had a long, powerful presence practically all over the Indian subcontinent even much before the movements we speak about.⁴⁰ The medieval phase is traditionally seen as a revival of the older, much more wholesome condition of the Indian society when the ideals of the *bhakti*-permeated worldview were commonly accepted.⁴¹

The *bhakti* movements form a wide spectrum with the orthodox *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* on the one end, and the so-called *sants* on the other. Many *bhakti* poets have synthesized both of these extremes in different degrees, and traditionally even the Hindi word *sant* may be used rather broadly, much the way it is used in its English equivalent, i.e. a saint. The *ācāryas* were also *sants*, and an early hagiography of numerous *bhakti* saints and poets made no distinction whatsoever about their philosophical stances or level of social conventionalism⁴². Nevertheless, for the purpose of easier classification, let us first deal with the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* as the most easily definable.

Contemporary Indian scholars, especially those personally affiliated with any of the *bhakti* movements, are sometimes visibly exasperated – and with a reason – at the sheer prevalence of the *advaita* doctrine in the field of classical Indian philosophical studies. Along with the historical reasons mentioned above, this is so because the Western term philosophy has come to be so markedly separated from religion. This again is a consequence of European history, and does not suit well the

⁴⁰ Suvira Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism* (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 188-228, and, S. C. Mukherji, *A Study of Vaiṣṇavism in Ancient and Medieval Bengal* (Calcutta, 1966), pp. 1-90.

⁴¹ For example, the *Skanda Purāṇa* narrates that the great grandson of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Vajranābha, administered the area of Lord Kṛṣṇa's youth (Vraja), and installed many *arcā-mūrtis* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for the inhabitants to worship. That must have been happening soon after the departure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa from this world, roughly 3000 B. C.

⁴² That is, the *Bhakta-māl* of Nābhādāsji, a collection of short biographical sketches of *bhakts*, or *sants*.

Indian situation where both of these fields are often inseparable. To this day, many Indian theistic schools of interpreting *Vedānta* are minimized, and only *advaita* (monism) is taken to be applicable to the term philosophy.

Some may feel that the 'meta-theism' of *advaita*, a philosophy which subsumes any definite image of God in the absolute Form-less-ness, and Attribute-less-ness, is a much-needed common ground for interreligious harmony. Ever since the speech of Swami Vivekānanda (1863-1902) in the *World's Parliament of Religions* in Chicago in 1893, the philosophy of *advaita* is seen as a common denominator in the confusion of religious diversity. When all differences are diffused in the ultimate abstraction of the idea of God, and when religious dialogue, according to some, is finally possible, alas, at that point, no dialogue is needed any longer. *Advaita*, if taken at its face value and driven to its logical conclusion, may be perceived as accommodating all religious variety, but it dismisses all that variety just as easily in the ultimate, *pāramārthika* stage, leaving the worshippers either 'stuck' forever in the lower, *vyāvahārika* level of *saguṇa* worship, or taking away from them that which should have been dearest to them. Perhaps we could nevertheless build interreligious harmony not on the basis of negation, but allow the positive spiritual variety to exist and enrich us.

Bhakti and Vedānta

Alongside the *Advaita-vedānta* of Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya (788-820), many *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* have also tried to give meaning to the terse aphorisms of the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Their theistic interpretations may seem closer to the original meaning of the *sūtras* than the interpretations of Śaṅkarācārya, but raising such an issue means swimming against the current. For example, an innocent and impartial translator of the commentaries to *Vedānta-sūtras*, the French philologist George Thibaut found himself enveloped in controversy. In his introduction to the commentary of Śaṅkara⁴³, he openly wrote in favour of the commentary of the *Vaiṣṇava ācārya* Rāmānuja. Native scholarly opposition to his rather balanced view was so fierce that in the next volume, a translation of the commentary of Rāmānuja, Thibaut

⁴³ His reasoning was that, considering the fact that the *Vedānta-sūtras* originally include the doctrine of *vyūha*, which is considered to be a *Vaiṣṇava* concept, it is quite probable that Rāmānuja is closer than Śaṅkara to the original tradition of understanding the *Vedānta-sūtras*. Vyāsadeva also seems to be more inclined towards the *Vaiṣṇava* theory of *pariṇāma* (the world as an actual – albeit temporary – transformation of spirit) than Śaṅkara's theory of *vivarta* (the world as an illusory transformation of spirit). George Thibaut (Tr.), *Vedānta-sūtras with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, Sacred Books of the East Series*, Vol. 34, 38 (Delhi, 1904). Introduction appears on pages ix-cxxviii.

dismissed the issue of comparison altogether, saying that it is beyond his scope and time.⁴⁴

Due to the hard labor of a few enthusiasts, library shelves by now boast with minute studies of the theistic commentaries of *Vedānta*, and we may quickly peruse them⁴⁵. Historically, four distinct *Vaiṣṇava* lineages exist, each with their own founder, and with later *ācāryas* who may have revived the lineage or may have given it the flavor of their own intuition. The *Śrī-sampradāya* found its able protagonist in Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya (1017-1137), and the *Śrī Vaiṣṇavas* are up to the present day very widespread in Tamil Nadu. Their teachings have reached the North of India as well, especially through Rāmānanda (1400-1470), who was a distant disciple of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja's system of interpreting *Vedānta* has come to be known as *viśiṣṭādvaita*, or 'qualified monism', and it postulates Lord Viṣṇu as the highest reality. As the personal Supreme Lord beyond matter, endowed with innumerable auspicious attributes, *kalyāṇa-guṇas*, He is easily attainable (*sulabha*) by devotion (*bhakti*) and surrender (*prapatti*).⁴⁶ The *sampradāya* of Rāmānuja was divided into two communities on the basis of a theological issue, the way of understanding God's Grace. One group uses the analogy of a cat holding her puppies in her mouth to carry them to safety, while the other group advances the analogy of the monkey mother, to whom the monkey cub needs to hold on with its own strength. It is an interesting variety of seeking a balance between *faith* and *work*, much more so since it is undoubtedly indigenous⁴⁷. The Tamil land has its own rich history of *bhakti* poetry enframed in the memory of the ancient *bhakti* saints, the *Ālvārs*. Their chronology is an extremely tangled issue⁴⁸, while their poems, the *Tamil Veda*, or *Divya-prabandham*, have been an inspiration to generations of South Indian *Vaiṣṇavas*. One of the *Ālvārs* was a lady, *Āṇḍāl*, a poetess of *bhakti* lyrics in old Tamil, and the fervor of her love towards Lord Raṅganātha was often described by scholars as 'bridal mysticism', a desire to attain the Lord as her spouse.

⁴⁴ Vol. 48 of the *Sacred Books of the East Series*.

⁴⁵ The most handy overview is available in: Swami Tapasyananda, *Bhakti Schools of Vedānta* (Chennai, 2003).

⁴⁶ Selected from: P. N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita* (Chennai, 1978), and S. M. Srinivasa Chari: *Vaiṣṇavism – Its Philosophy, Theology and Religious Discipline* (Delhi, 2005).

⁴⁷ In the early times of the British acquaintance with the Tamil *bhakti* movements, the proposition of the influence of the Nestorian Christians who settled in South India during the first millennium A.D. was often debated. Such theories have been dismissed as soon as the chronology of works on *bhakti* such as the *Bhagavad-gītā* was moved back beyond the beginning of the Christian era. It became obvious that *Vaiṣṇavism* predated Christianity, although the traditional date of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, cca. 3000 B.C., is still not acceptable to many.

⁴⁸ In his study of South-Indian *bhakti*, Friedhelm Hardy openly declares that the chronology is simply too complicated: piles of studies and arguments – textual, astrological, and other – have not arrived at any satisfactory conclusion. Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha Bhakti – The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India* (New York – Delhi, 1983). I avoid any whimsical arguments which, while unable to prove that the traditional dates are wrong, give later dates for the *Ālvārs* and thus unnecessarily undermine their legacy.

If we, pure in our hearts, meditate on, offer flowers to, and sing praises of
The mysterious One, born in Mathurā, residing on the bank of Yamunā,
The river with pure waters, the light of the Gokula clan,
Dāmodara, Who has made his mother's womb radiant –
All sins, past, and future, will disappear like dust in fire.
Let us, therefore, recite His names.⁴⁹

The main teacher of the *Kumāra-sampradāya* was Nimbārkācārya (c. 12th century A.D.). Nimbārka's philosophy is called *dvaitādvaita*, apprehending the relation of God to the world as a simultaneous unity (*advaita*) as well as difference (*dvaita*). An even starker dichotomy between God and the world was pronounced by Madhvācārya (1238-1317) in his philosophy of *dvaita*, or pure dualism. He is the ācārya of the *Brahma-sampradāya*, and the seat of the lineage is still very vibrant (in Uḍupi, Karnataka). Within the scholastic tradition of Madhva's successors, a lively movement of *bhakti* poets sprang up in the sixteenth century, called the Haridāsa or the Dāsakūṭa movement. Singers of devotional songs went from door to door, encouraging piety and surrender to God among the masses. Purandara Dāsa (1484-1564) and Kanaka Dāsa (1509-1607) are among the most famous of these Kannada *bhakti* poets. Purandara Dāsa was a prosperous jeweler, who suddenly, by a traumatic experience which made him see the fault of his miserliness, opted for an ascetic life of devotion.

Are you yet to get kindly disposed towards me? This servant of Yours?
Are you yet to get kindly disposed?
O Lord sleeping on the serpent, o Supreme Person, Hari!
In various countries, at various times, in various wombs I have been born,
Into this hell of 'I and mine' I have fallen,
This servant of Yours believes that You are the only refuge,
Are you yet to get kindly disposed?⁵⁰

Kanaka Dāsa was a son of a shepherd and according to current custom of those days he was not allowed to enter temples. He is famous in Uḍupi for having obtained a vision of Lord Kṛṣṇa through a hole in the temple wall. In the corpus of his poems of which many are humble and unpretentious, one may nevertheless find a remark or two about the relation of *bhakti* to caste:

They talk of caste times without number.
Pray, tell me, what is the caste of men who have felt real bliss?
When a lotus is born in mud, do they not offer it to the Almighty?
Do not the brāhmaṇas drink the milk which comes from the flesh of cows?

⁴⁹ V. K. Subramanian, *Sacred Songs of India* (New Delhi, 1996) p. 25 (*Tiruppāvai* of Āṇḍāl, poem 5).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Do they not besmear their bodies with deer musk?
What is the caste of Lord Nārāyaṇa? And Śiva?
What is the caste of the soul? Of the living being?
Why talk of caste when God has blessed you? ⁵¹

An offshoot of the Mādhva lineage was Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism, started by the saint Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya (1486-1533)⁵². A vast theological legacy was the work of his disciples, while Śrī Caitanya himself only wrote eight verses on the glory of the Lord's holy name. His precepts and his personal charisma inspired thousands of his followers in pursuing an ecstatic devotional relationship with the Lord, mainly through the practice of singing or reciting God's name. His movement has woken up the society of Bengal in a social, literary, artistic and religious sense. His disciples have revived Vṛndāvana, the cowherd village of Lord Kṛṣṇa, as a vibrant pilgrimage centre.

O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names, like Kṛṣṇa and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them.⁵³

The main teacher of the Rudra-sampradāya was Viṣṇusvāmī, about whom not much is known, but one of his later influential followers was Vallabhācārya (1479-1532). His interpretation of Vedānta is called śuddhādvaita or pure monism, in contrast to Śāṅkara's monism which, as Vallabha argues, allows māyā (or avidyā) to contaminate the ever pure Brahman. Vallabhācārya himself was a prolific writer and a poet, and had many musically gifted disciples. Four of them, and four disciples of his son Viṭṭhalanātha, are known conjointly as "the Aṣṭachāp", or the 'eight seals of poetry'. Coming from diverse backgrounds and different parts of India, they settled in Vraja, the place of Lord Kṛṣṇa's early life, a rural area between Delhi and Agra. They were often summoned to the Mughal court in the vicinity (Fatehpur Sikri) and implored to become court singers, but one of the poets, Kumbhan Dāsa, replied with the proverbial "santoṇ ko sikrī so kyā kām?"

⁵¹ M. Sivaramkrishna, Sumita Roy (Ed.), *Poet Saints of India* (New Delhi, 1996), p. 184.

⁵² Some Bengali scholars working only with the works of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism have doubted the connection to the Mādhva line through Mādhavendra Purī, on the grounds that Purī is usually a *sannyāsa* title of Śāṅkarite monks. But the biographical material on Vallabha (who was a contemporary of both Mādhavendra and Caitanya) proves that Mādhavendra was indeed a *sannyāsī* of the Mādhva line. Informative, but skeptical is the work of S. K. De, *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1961).

⁵³ Śikṣāṣṭaka, verse 2.

What business do ascetics have in the capital?
Coming and going the shoe gets destroyed –
And so does our contemplation of the Lord's name.⁵⁴

The most famous among the eight is Sūradāsa (1483-1563), the blind poet⁵⁵. The collection of his poems numbering in thousands, rightly named *Sūra-sāgara* (The Ocean of Sūra's Poetry) is full of vivid images of Lord Kṛṣṇa's youth and the varying moods of devotion expressed towards Him, in the local dialect called Brajbhāṣā.

My eyes are thirsty to have a look at Hari
I want to see the Lotus-eyed one, I remain sad day and night.
His forehead is painted with sandal paste,
He wears a pearl necklace, and is a resident of Vṛndāvana.
I have developed affection for You,
neglected my body, and put my neck into a noose.
Who knows my mind? People laugh at me.
O Lord, Sūradāsa, without seeing You, wants to die.⁵⁶

The Bhakti Poets

Even outside the circle of the philosophically perfected four *sampradāyas*, there have been many illustrious personalities who made the object of their devotion closer to the masses. Many of them were devout *Vaiṣṇavas*, worshippers of Viṣṇu, much along the lines of the *sampradāyas*. The most outstanding among them are the *bhakti* poets Mīrā Bāi of Rājasthān, Tūkārāma of Mahārāṣṭra, Tulasīdāsa of Vārāṇasī, Narsī Mehtā of Gujarāt and Vidyāpati of Mithilā.

Their works – and this is true for many of the *bhakti* poets – are often preserved in anthologies in different localities and even fully grown into the local culture and language different from their own original dialect. We nevertheless have to be cautious to not be too demanding of the historical documents preserved for so many generations. What they sang about was always closely understood and almost

⁵⁴ *Poet Saints of India*, p. 54.

⁵⁵ Many details of these poets' lives are often contested and subjects of protracted research and debate: dates, the actual blindness of Sūradāsa and historicity of many poems attributed to him may be issues that we simply have no final settlement about. See Krishna P. Bahadur, *The Poems of Sūradāsa* (New Delhi, 1999). Nevertheless, cultural differences may obscure our judgment: I am not inclined to agree with John S. Hawley who argues that Sūradāsa was probably not really blind, since the contemporary hagiographers only speak of him as having *divya-dṛṣṭi* and never refer to actual blindness. The culture of those times might have been such that mentioning anyone's actual blindness was perceived as blunt and offensive, especially about a saintly figure.

⁵⁶ *Sacred Songs of India*, p. 225.

anticipated by the public. After picking up the style of these poets, their followers might have been adding to the corpus in that innocent manner of a devout interpreter, basking in the brilliance of their established charisma.⁵⁷

Mīrā Bāī (1498-1547) needs almost no introduction, and the lines of her famous poems ring in the ears of many Indians: *mere to girdhar gopāl, dūsro na koi*. “My Lord is the cowherd Kṛṣṇa, the upholder of the Govardhana Hill, no one else.” She was a Rajput princess, wife of King Bhojarāja, who died early, leaving Mīrā exposed to unfavorable relatives. In the enthusiasm of her devotion, and absorption in the worship of the Deity of Kṛṣṇa she possessed since childhood, she was often accused of neglecting her domestic and social responsibilities.

*My family members repeatedly try to restrain me,
But attachment to the Dancer with a peacock feather in His hair
Has sunk deep.
My mind is drowned in the beauty of Śyāma,
And the world says I have gone astray.*⁵⁸

Tūkārāma (1608-1650), the revered *Vaiṣṇava* poet of Mahārāṣṭra, was in a similar predicament of failing to uphold the expectations of his family. As a simple grocer, he was often on the verge of poverty, frequently because of his extreme generosity and an amazing level of compassion for all creatures around him. His *abhaṅgs*, short Marathi poems, are full of simple wisdom and devotion. He was a contemporary of Śivājī, the national hero of Mahārāṣṭra, who was deeply impressed by the saint’s character. Tūkārāma was part of the greater Mahārāṣṭrian *bhakti* movement, ignited by Jñāneśvara, Ekanātha and Nāmadeva a few centuries before him. Tūkārāma upheld their legacy and was a strong pillar of the *Vārkarī* sect of worshippers of Viṭṭhalanātha in Pandharpur.

*Today is a day of bliss, supreme bliss
When we recite the names of Govinda, the joy is incomparable!
Visiting the temple in Pandharpur is always bliss for us.
We sing, dance, and clap our hands to entertain Govinda.
For us devotees, every day is Dīpāvalī!
Our joy is fearless, for the Lord protects us.
Tūkārāma says, Let there be no fear of birth and death!
Being with the Lord is the permanent desire of all devotees.*⁵⁹

⁵⁷ The issue is tackled in: John Stratton Hawley, *Three Bhakti Voices: Mirabai, Surdas and Kabir in Their Times and Ours* (New Delhi, 2005). Again, so many hundreds of years later we cannot hope to know for sure, I therefore avoid trusting the research that points towards alleged inauthenticity.

⁵⁸ Shanta Subba Rao, “Mirabai”, in *Poet Saints of India*, p. 117.

⁵⁹ *Sacred Songs of India*, p. 277.

Tulasīdāsa (1532-1623) was the foremost among the poets who profess devotion to Lord Rāma. Amongst the vernacular works permeated with the spirit of *bhakti*, Tulasīdāsa's *Rāma-carita-mānasa* (The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rāma) is, at least in the Hindi speaking area, certainly the most widely read. It is a devotional reworking of the already devotional Sanskrit epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, with a charming style and simplicity of expression. In the chapter of Rāma's dwelling in the forest, the touching episode of His meeting with the old ascetic lady, Śabarī, had always been the favorite of listeners who sit spellbound in long recitations of the familiar, homely Hindi rhymes. The so-called 'Śabarī episode' is a revelation of the strength and purity of *bhakti*.⁶⁰ Lord Rāma sat down in the old lady's cottage and recounted to her His definition of devotion:

"Now I tell you the nine types of devotion, listen attentively and lay them up in your mind. The first in order is fellowship with the saints, and the second, fondness for the legends relating to Me. The third is selfless service to the *guru*, the fourth consists in the hymning of all My virtues with a guileless heart. The repetition of My mystic Name with steadfast faith constitutes the fifth form of adoration revealed in the *Vedas*, the sixth is the practice of self-restraint, virtue and detachment from manifold activities, with ceaseless pursuit of the path of the good. He who practices the seventh type sees the entire world filled with My presence, and regards the saints as even greater than Myself. He who cultivates the eighth type is content with whatever he has and never dreams of spying out faults in others. The ninth form of devotion demands that one should be simple and straight in one's dealings with all and should in his heart cherish implicit faith in Me without either exultation or depression. Whoever practices any of these – man or woman, animate or inanimate – is, O lady, very dear to Me." (*Rāma-carita-mānasa*, *Aranya-kāṇḍa*)⁶¹

Narsī (or Narsimh) Mehtā (1414-1480) was a Gujarati saint and poet. His hagiographers describe a vivid mystical vision that entranced him, and which later on dictated the theme for many of his poems. His verses dwell on the love of Rādhā

⁶⁰ Śabarī is an uneducated lady who escaped her home village because she did not approve of the killing of animals going on there, and found shelter in the hermitage of an elderly sage Mataṅga. The sage predicted Rāma's arrival and, before himself leaving the world, instructed the Śabarī to wait for Rāma and welcome Him in the empty forest *āśrama*. The old Śabarī obeys him wholeheartedly, preparing every single day for the arrival of the Lord. When Lord Rāma finally arrived, He found the old lady anticipating His visit, with a plate of half-chewed berries in her hands. Picking the wild berries, she was afraid they would be sour, and so she bit into each and every one of them to test their sweetness. Only the sweet ones wound up on the plate, and they were now offered to her Lord Rāma. As if not noticing that they are all half-chewed, Rāma took a handful off the plate and tasted them, praising their sweetness. At this point in the recitation, the audience is lost in appreciation of Rāma's reaction, and those who know the Hindu rules of purity, or just how inappropriate it is to offer half-eaten articles to such an honored guest, will understand the depth of the story.

⁶¹ I use the English translation by R. C. Prasad (Delhi, 1988), p. 497.

and Kṛṣṇa, instructions on piety and *bhakti* for his fellow countrymen, personal confessions, and gratitude at the Lord's interventions in the events of his life.

Having been born in a respectable family of *brāhmaṇas*, he was criticized for singing God's praise in the company of the untouchables.

*I am what you say that I am, if it pleases you to think that I am such a one.
If you think I'm not fit to sing Kṛṣṇa's praise, then Dāmodara's servant I'll become.
Of all in society, I am the lowest. Lower than the lowest of the low.
You may call me by any bad names you like, all I know is I'm deeply in love.
I don't understand the talk of karma and dharma. All these things are not near my God.
All who feel higher than these Harijanas have wasted their whole human life.*⁶²

The term Harijana 'the people of God' which Narsī used to denote the untouchable castes, was later adopted by Gandhi. The following poem by Narsī, one of Mahatma Gandhi's most beloved hymns, expresses in simple and moving words the ideal of sanctity:

*Call that one a true Vaiṣṇava who feels the suffering of others,
Who seeks to relieve others' pain, and has no pride in his soul.
He bows respectfully to the whole world, he talks ill of no one,
He remains steadfast in mind, words and actions – blessed, blessed be his mother!
He is impartial to all, he has renounced all greed, another man's wife is his mother,
His tongue speaks no lie, he does not touch another man's property.
He remains unaffected by māyā and moha, in his soul is total detachment,
He is absorbed in meditation on Rāma's name; within his body, all the tīrthas are found!
Without cupidity or guile is he, without lust or anger,
Says Narsaiyo, by the mere view of such a sant, seventy-two generations find salvation!*⁶³

Vidyāpati (1350-1460) was a court poet in Mithilā (present-day Bihar and Nepal). He was a contemporary of the Bengali poet Caṇḍīdāsa, and both were treading the path of their predecessor poet Jayadeva, the author of the *Gīta-govinda*. Vidyāpati's hundreds of songs on love towards Lord Kṛṣṇa and his personal supplications to Him, collected in the *Padāvalī*, are still current in Mithilā. He wrote in his local dialect, Maithili.

*Mādhava! Along with an offering of Tulasī and sesame seeds,
I sacrifice my whole self for You.
I know You are kind and will not reject me.
When you consider my character, you can only count faults,
There is not even a trace of virtue in me.*

⁶² Swami Mahadevananda, *Devotional Songs of Narsī Mehtā* (Delhi, 1985), p. 128.

⁶³ Quoted in: Karine Schomer, W. H. McLeod (Ed.), *The Sants – Studies in a Devotional Tradition in India* (Delhi, 1987), p. 39-40.

You are the Lord of the Universe, this world is Yours.
 And I, a poor sinner, am also within this world (so I am Yours).
 Again and again, according to my past deeds,
 Let me be born as a man or an animal, bird, worm or an insect.
 But let my mind always rest in You!
 With great remorse, Vidyāpati says,
 You are the miraculous means to cross over saṁsāra!
 Allow me to grasp Your tender lotuslike feet, O friend of the poor!⁶⁴

Unorthodox streams within the Bhakti Movement

Let us now proceed to the less definable, 'grey areas' of the *bhakti* movement. Here we encounter poets and mystics who move freely between the personal and impersonal conceptions of the Divine, or who are seen as unorthodox in any other way by the Hindu society (or by the other less revolutionary *bhakti* movements). That includes the consideration of their eligibility for being recognized as teachers, if it so happens that their caste stands in the way and does not easily admit adoration by the possible higher-caste followers. It also includes philosophical tenets or details of devotional practice which are an admixture of various beliefs, most often that means Islamic or yogic influences. Such blends are usually not supported by the orthodox society, but their popular appeal seems to be high. They are presented here for the sake of making an all-round presentation of the *bhakti* movements, although most of the *Vaiṣṇava* movements have had a generally united stand on these issues. While lower caste birth was not considered an obstacle for religious participation, the religious rights could not exactly be used for social scale-climbing. Outstanding individuals were given great respect on account of their spiritual accomplishments, but they themselves would often insist on staying in the background. The stray *bhakti* poets across the country were approaching the issue in their individual ways, and received a palette of responses.

Ravidāsa (b. 1376) was a lucid devotee-poet from Vārāṇasī, born in a family of cobblers. His presence among the *bhakti* poets has slackened the previous rigid boundaries between the higher and lower castes, as well as the idea of absolute ranking of qualification via one's birth.

O well-born of Vārāṇasī, I too am born well-known.
 My labor is with leather. But my heart can boast of the Lord.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *Sacred Songs of India*, p. 128-9

⁶⁵ *Poet Saints of India*, p. 85

His biographers describe the impact of Ravidāsa's poetry and personality in glowing terms; he was able to attract a large gathering of high-caste listeners who readily admitted the truth of his simple arguments.

*I've never known how to tan or sew though people came to me for shoes.
I have not the needle to make the holes or even the tool to cut the thread.
Others stitch and knot, and tie themselves up, while I, who do not knot, break free.
I keep saying Rāma and Rāma, says Ravidāsa, and death keeps his business to himself.*

Kabīr (1440-1518), a Muslim weaver and a disciple of the *Vaiṣṇava* preacher Rāmānanda, moved between the Hindu and Islamic community and attacked the weaknesses, as he perceived them, of both. His mystical poems aimed at jerking his fellow people and making them realize the futility of mindlessly performed traditional religiosity.

The tendency for devotees and students of Kabīr to interpret him each in his own way has always been strong. Kabīr, like Gandhi, is much quoted and manipulated to suit a variety of ends. One senses in some studies of Kabīr that he is regarded as not fully presentable and in need of a little adjustment: by Muslims to make him more respectable in Islamic circles – they would have him a *pīr*; by sectarian *yogīs* who must have found his lack of enthusiasm for narrow sectarianism uncomfortable – they would have him a *yogī* or more; by *vedāntīs* who would like to rescue him from the taint of Islam and clumsy thought and bring him into the more intellectually sophisticated streams of Indian metaphysics; by other schools of *bhakti* who, finding him hard to classify, would hold that his *nirguṇa-bhakti* was inconsistent and would wrongly discover the doctrine of *avatāra* in his verse; by the old Christian missionary scholars rejoicing to detect a Christian influence on Kabīr. Westcott hailed him as a 'Mohammedan Saint'. R. C. Varma sees him as the savior of Hinduism from Islam. Recent writers depict him as a social revolutionary comparable to Gandhi. This tendency to use Kabīr, to win him over to one's camp, instead of studying him and understanding him, has retarded Kabīr studies for a long time, though it is losing ground in recent scholarly circles.⁶⁶

Sometimes, Kabīr's point could be just as orthodox as that of any other *Vaiṣṇava* poet:

*O Govinda, I am such a sinner. I have omitted to practice bhakti to the Lord who gave me this living body.
What have I achieved in this world and what benefit have I derived from this birth? I possessed the magic stone which would fulfill my wish for salvation, and not for a second have I taken it into my heart!*

⁶⁶ William J. Dwyer, *Bhakti in Kabīr* (Patna, 1985), p. 19

What a champion I have been at abusing others, coveting their goods and their wives, and pointing out their faults! I keep being born and reborn eternally and cannot break the cycle.

Lust, anger, deceit, infatuation and jealousy, with all their offspring, abide in me. Even in my dreams there is no mercifulness, dharma, knowledge, or service to my guru.

O You who pity the lowly, O merciful Dāmodara, lover of the bhaktas, I feel defeated. Kabīr says: Take care of this timid soul and I will go on serving You.

At other times, his social satire prevails. Often, he dismisses just about any way or path he has seen or heard about, to make a strong point about his own mystical relation to God:

O brother, Kabīr has only a small circle of friends; so to whom shall I repeat this truth? I leave the disposition of all my life to Him who holds sway over destruction, creation and preservation. I have combed through the whole creation and have discovered that without Hari ignorance reigns; the six Hindu philosophies, the ninety-six prescriptions of the Buddhists, all make this their concern, but know nothing. Reciting prayers, austerity, mortification, idol-worship, astrology, these have driven the world insane; they have written their treatises and led the world astray; but they have omitted to retire into the innermost recesses of the heart. Kabīr says: Yogīs and mendicants are all raising false hopes. Imitate a thirsty bird, cry out the name of Rāma and you will assuredly find rest in divine love (bhakti).⁶⁷

Scathing satire and revilement of the established ways of religious commitment by a few individualist poets may have gone over the boundaries of propriety in the eyes of the other less revolutionary *bhakti* movements. Vemana (15th century), a free-minded poet of Andhra, seems to be on the cutting edge of social and religious criticism:

*The solitariness of a dog! The meditation of a crane!
The chanting of an ass! The bathing of a frog!
Ah, why will ye not try to know your own hearts?*

*What are you the better for smearing your body with ashes?
Your thoughts should be set on God alone,
For the rest, an ass can wallow in dirt as well as you.*

*The books that are called the Vedas are like courtesans,
Deluding men, and wholly unfathomable,
But the hidden knowledge of God is like an honorable wife.*

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 54.

He that fasts shall become a village pig (in his next life),
He that embraces poverty shall become a beggar,
And he that bows to a stone shall become like a lifeless image.⁶⁸

Here again, a discerning *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* would be quite sure of his judgment, and would indignantly oppose this exaggerated critique of austerity, and even more, the meaningful devoted service to the *arcā-mūrti* (Deity⁶⁹). Not only the *bhakti* movements themselves, but the majority of the Hindu orthodoxy felt that in their zeal, some of these sharp preachers have gone way too far. A considerable amount of opposition was directed at the *sants* of the *nirguṇa-bhakti* school, especially Kabīr and Dādu Dayāl, for their unconventional views about the bona-fide *Vaiṣṇava* practices such as ritual worship of the images of Viṣṇu. One of the persons not agreeing with the extremes of their critique, and often writing in defense of the orthodox social order was the famous Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa. Some scholars argue that if Kabīr would have been exposed to the meticulous devotional theology of the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* and their soul-stirring justification behind the *saguṇa* worship, his views might have been different. But since he grew up among the people where lower forms of superstitious Hinduism were in proliferation, and was in contact with Islam, this might have led him to deny all rituals as an inadequate practice.

The personalities described above do not exhaust the composite whole of the *bhakti* movements across India. For example, much like Tulasīdāsa, another representative of the stream of *Rāma-bhakti* was Tyāgarāja (1767-1847), a native of Tamil Nadu, who has left behind a veritable mine of *bhakti* poetry as well as a polished style of performance (the so-called Carnatic music). And yet he is often excluded from the accounts of the *bhakti* movement, probably because of not fitting exactly within its imagined chronological borders. Moreover, while it may be misleading to do so, history forces us to study only the leading poets and teachers of a particular tradition who are represented by their lyrics or philosophical writings, while many of their followers, in fact whole lineages, and many other saints who were not so eloquent, remain in the background. Another dimension closely related to the *bhakti* movements was the boom of vernacular translations and retellings of the ancient Sanskrit texts, especially the two epics. Again, this is a pan-Indian phenomenon and a theme in itself. The *bhakti* movements with their *brāhmaṇical* philosophy and insistence on internal and external purity have triggered a social phenomenon called *sanskritization*, or unification of culture according to the roles and example of the higher castes.

Another movement intricately connected with the *bhakti* movement is Sikhism, a religious group established in Punjab by Guru Nānak (1496-1539). In the Sikh scripture, the *Guru Granth Sāhib*, a few poems by the *bhakti* poets (there called

⁶⁸ Poet Saints of India, pp. 151-154, *Footprints India Handbook* 1997 by Robert and Roma Bradnock, p. 1083.

⁶⁹ I avoid the word idol with its negative connotations; the word icon is closer but still inadequate.

bhagats) have been included, for example, those by Nāmadeva, Ravidāsa, Kabīr, Sūradāsa and Rāmānanda. The Sikh religion, although showing traces of Islamic influence in its breaking away from ritual worship, highly values the recitation of God's name, and in many of the poems of the *Guru Granth Sāhib* we find notions familiar to us from the poetry of the *bhakti* movement. Following Kabīr, the names of God in their poems are often of *Vaiṣṇava* origin.

*So many scriptures, I have searched them all.
None can compare to the priceless Name of God.
Better by far than any other dharma is the act of repeating the perfect Name of God.
Better by far than any other rite is cleansing one's heart in the company of the devout.
Better by far than any other skill is endlessly to utter the wondrous Name of God.
Better by far than any other place is the heart wherein
God is infinite, beyond all comprehending.
Yet he who repeats the Name will find himself set free.
Hear me, my friend, for I long to hear
The tale which is told in the company of the free.⁷⁰*

g) Conclusion

The *bhakti* movement, with popular Hinduism by its side, was a lively arena of contesting religious performances where scriptural authority, social acceptability, and mystical authenticity emerged in various alliances amongst each other. While the *sants* derided outward showy saintliness and sectarian symbols, the *Vaiṣṇavas* chose to improve from within without giving up the externals. The *sants* spoke against the worship of 'idols', while the *Vaiṣṇavas* saw the relationship with their beloved Deity as an unprecedented help in the deepening of their devotion. Some deprecated mere outward purity when the mind remained impure, while others laughed at lofty contemplation as being a mere excuse of lazy ascetics. Some reviled the incompetent priests, while others complained of low-caste opportunist saints who usurped the position of teachers and were bold enough to receive respect. Some strands of the *bhakti* movement decried frenzied pilgrimages and ritual bathing, proposing a personal bond with the Lord instead, while others considered the formal pious practices as part of their routine of purity and an expression of devotion.

The vignettes of the *bhakti* movement sketched above perhaps give an inordinate stress on originality, breaking away from established norms, or religious syncretism. The presented saints are often an exception more than a rule, a few extremely

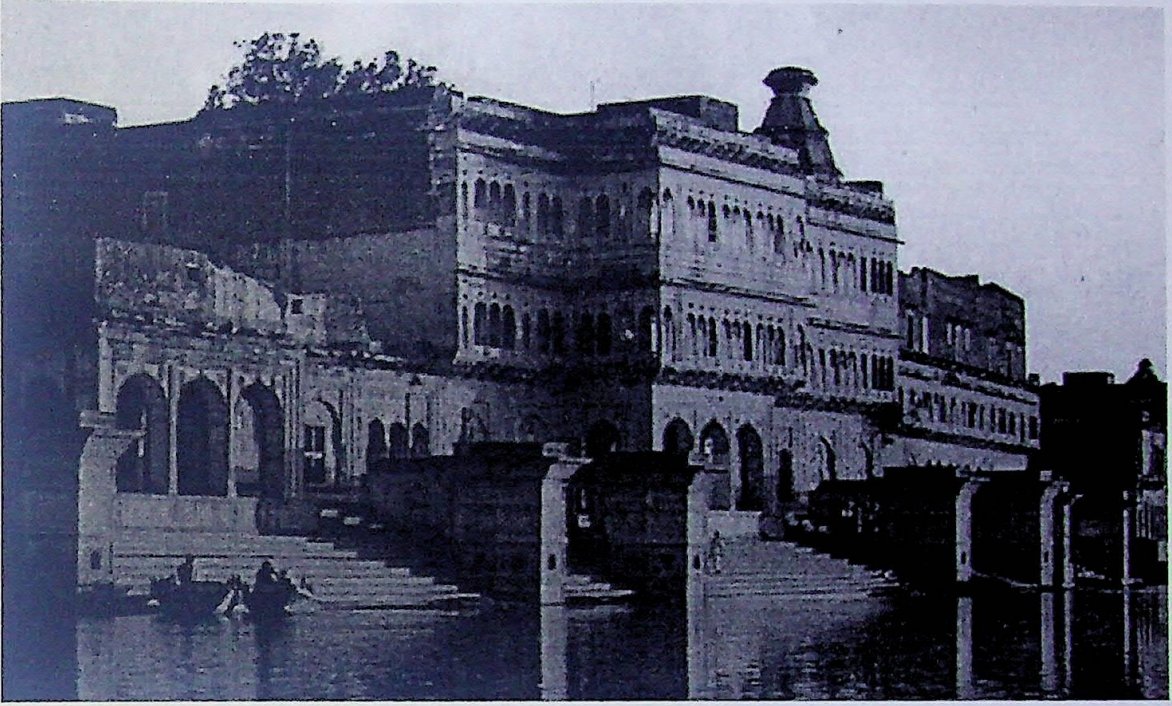
⁷⁰ *Sukhmanī*, 1. 7, quoted in "Sikh Hymns to the Divine Name", in Donald S. Lopez (Ed.), *Religions of India in Practice* (New Delhi, 1998).

intuitive individuals with great integrity and a purified desire of attaining the Lord which pierces through layers of possible internal obstacles in their way. Rather than encouraging whimsical 'search of God' on one's own, the majority of the *bhakti* traditions have an exhaustive and developed scriptural backing, usually the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, along with later expositions by the *gurus* of their particular lineage. Submission and fidelity to one's preceptor is stressed to an extraordinary degree, and leaving one's chosen teacher in search of 'deeper truths' is an unforgivable sin. In general, *bhakti* is quite uniformly understood as a genuine attempt of a deep connection with the Lord which should be free from all blemishes. The deliberation on what is to be given up and which practices are to be upheld is based rather strictly on the scriptures of the devotional path and the exemplary models of previous saints.

*○ my prayers three times a day, all glory to you. ○ bathing, I offer my obeisances unto you. ○ demigods! ○ forefathers! Please excuse me for my inability to offer you my respects. Now wherever I sit, I can remember my Lord Kṛṣṇa, and thereby I can free myself from all sinful bondage. I think this is sufficient for me.*⁷¹

Although most of the *Vaiṣṇava bhakti* movements share a great majority of views and practices, this thesis will highlight the *siddhāntas* and examples of the *Gauḍīya paramparā*, on account of its being one of the most widespread *bhakti* movements, and due to the personal commitment of the author, which, it is hoped, could shed additional light upon the subject matter rather than obscure it.

⁷¹ A verse traditionally attributed to Mādhavendra Purī, a sixteenth-century saint and mystic.



Keśī Ghāṭ on the Yamunā River, Vṛndāvana

*smerāṇa bhaṅga-traya-paricitāṇa śāci-vistṛṇa-dāṇīṇa
vaṇṇa-nyastādhara-kiṣalayāṃ ujjalāṇa candrakeṇa
govindākhyāṇa hari-tanum itau keṣi-tṛthopakaṇṇhe
mā prekṣiṇṇhās tava yadi sakhe bandhu-saṅge 'sti raṅgaṇ*

My dear friend, if you are indeed attached to your worldly relations, do not look at the smiling face of Lord Govinda as He stands on the bank of the Yamunā at Keśī Ghāṭ. Casting sidelong glances, He places His flute to His lips, which seem like newly blossomed twigs. His transcendental body, bending in three places, appears very bright in the moonlight. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1. 2. 239)

❧ *Part One* ❧

Aesthetic Theory of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī

Definitive of Bhakti

❧ *Chapter One* ❧

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's

Definition of Bhakti

1. 1. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

1. 1. 1. His Life

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (1489-1564)⁷², a prolific writer of *bhakti* literature in the sixteenth century, was a direct and intimate disciple of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1533). The main person shaping Rūpa Gosvāmī's views was of course his illustrious teacher, and the fact has been amply documented in many of the biographies of Śrī Caitanya⁷³, as well as in the *maṅgalācaraṇa* verses of the works of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. The close relationship that existed between the two is most gracefully described by Kavi Karṇapūra, another poet-scholar of the Caitanya-*sampradāya*, and the following verse composed by him is engraved in stone on one of the walls of the *bhajana-kuṭīra* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, in the medieval Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Vṛndāvana:

*priya-svarūpe dayita-svarūpe prema-svarūpe saha-jābhirūpe
nija-nurūpe prabhur eka-rūpe tatāna rūpe sva-vilāsa-rūpe*

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, whose dear friend was Svarūpa Dāmodara, was the exact replica of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and he was very, very dear to the Lord. Being the embodiment of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's ecstatic love, Rūpa Gosvāmī was naturally very beautiful. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu blessed Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the most competent receiver of His mercy, and empowered him to write about the forms and pastimes of the Supreme Lord.⁷⁴

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was a descendant of wealthy Karṇāṭaka *brāhmaṇas* who have moved to the eastern side of Bengal a few generations earlier. Himself, his elder brother Sanātana Gosvāmī and their younger brother Anupama (the father of Jīva Gosvāmī) became distinguished followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Even before meeting their master, Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana were extremely learned and devotionally inclined. Because of their impeccable character and qualifications, they were forced by the Nawab of Bengal into his service, which they reluctantly accepted for fear of troubles for the people from the unpredictable Nawab Hussein Shah. As his trusted ministers, they settled in Rāmakeli (today in West Bengal), close to the provincial capital in Gauḍa. There, they constructed a 'Gupta

⁷² These dates may be approximate (an overview of evidence found in Steven Rosen's *The Six Goswamis of Vrindavan*, New York 2002), and some indications are there that he could have lived longer. Others (Haberman, 2003) opine that Rūpa Gosvāmī could have been born as early as 1470. Sanātana Gosvāmī's dates are usually given as 1488-1558, while their younger brother Anupama died early, leaving behind the young son Jīva.

⁷³ For example, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* Ch. 19, *Antya* Ch. 1. The details of these accounts will be presented later on.

⁷⁴ Kavi Karṇapūra, Śrī Caitanya-*candrodaya-nāṭaka*, Act 9, verse 30.

Vṛndāvana' complete with sacred ponds and other geographic details of the abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, and spent their spare time in studying the devotional scriptures. Even before having met Śrī Caitanya, the depth of their spiritual emotions was unparalleled, as testified by the works written by them at that time. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī poured out his heart and his empathy for the suffering of the Vraja-gopīs in two heart-rending works, the *Hamsadūta* and the *Uddhava-sandēśa*.⁷⁵

When Mahāprabhu visited Rāmakeli on his way to Vṛndāvana in the year 1514, Rūpa and Sanātana were able to meet with him personally. He blessed them heartily and predicted that they would soon be able to escape from their troublesome occupation. Indeed, shortly after receiving his consolation they succeeded in setting themselves free and could join the growing society of *Vaiṣṇavas* under the banner of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The brothers met with their outstanding teacher a few times, during his travels and during his stay in Jagannātha Purī. He gladly spent time with them, instructing them in the intricacies of the devotional philosophy, and invested them with the responsibility of writing the scriptural basis of the *sampradāya*. His own written legacy, the *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, speaks volumes, and gives the highest precedence to the practice of *nāma-kīrtana*, so characteristic of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism*.

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpanam
śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam vidyā-vadhū-jivanam
ānandāmbudhi-varধানam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*

Let there be all victory for the chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which can cleanse the mirror of the heart and stop the miseries of the blazing fire of material existence. That chanting is the waxing moon that spreads the white lotus of good fortune for all living entities. It is the life and soul of all education. The chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa expands the blissful ocean of transcendental life. It gives a cooling effect to everyone and enables one to taste full nectar at every step. (*Śikṣāṣṭakam*, verse 1)

Because of their previous association with persons outside of the Hindu social scheme, the exceptional brothers always maintained an extraordinary depth of humility. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sent them to Vṛndāvana, the kingdom of *bhakti* and the childhood home of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, where they naturally grew into the respected spiritual doyens of the *Vaiṣṇavas* living there. Intent on rekindling the glory of the

⁷⁵ The first describes the delirious state of the *gopīs* in Vraja after the departure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā, and their poetic attempt to send a swan messenger to Him. The second is a message of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, detained in Mathurā by His parents, dictated to Uddhava to be read to the ladies in Vṛndāvana, consoling them and venting His own grief. These works remain the hidden treasure of the *sampradāya* to this day.

forgotten sacred sites, they dreamt of a flourishing pilgrimage centre, and their dreams have come true.

The great temple of Madana-mohana (Śrī Kṛṣṇa the enchanter of Cupid) on the Dvādaśāditya Hill, arching over the sacred landscape near the Yamunā river, was established by Sanātana Gosvāmī, and was the first of the temples to be built in Vṛndāvana. The Deity appeared in his dreams, and the next day while begging alms in Mathurā, he saw the same Deity in the house of a poor *brāhmaṇa*, Puruṣottama Chaube. The Deity appeared in the *brāhmaṇa*'s dream as well, and requested to be handed over to the Gosvāmī. Puruṣottama Chaube unwillingly gave in. Sanātana Gosvāmī took the Deity to nearby Vṛndāvana, a forested area at that time, and arranged for His worship in a little hut. The Gosvāmī hoped to be able to establish the worship in a grand way, and at times, the Deity Himself humorously demanded it from him.⁷⁶ Soon, with the help of a rich salt merchant Krishnadas Kapoor, an imposing temple for Madana-mohana was built on the bank of the Yamunā, in the 1580s. Today, unfortunately, the temple is in a dilapidated condition and in custody of the Archaeological Survey of India.

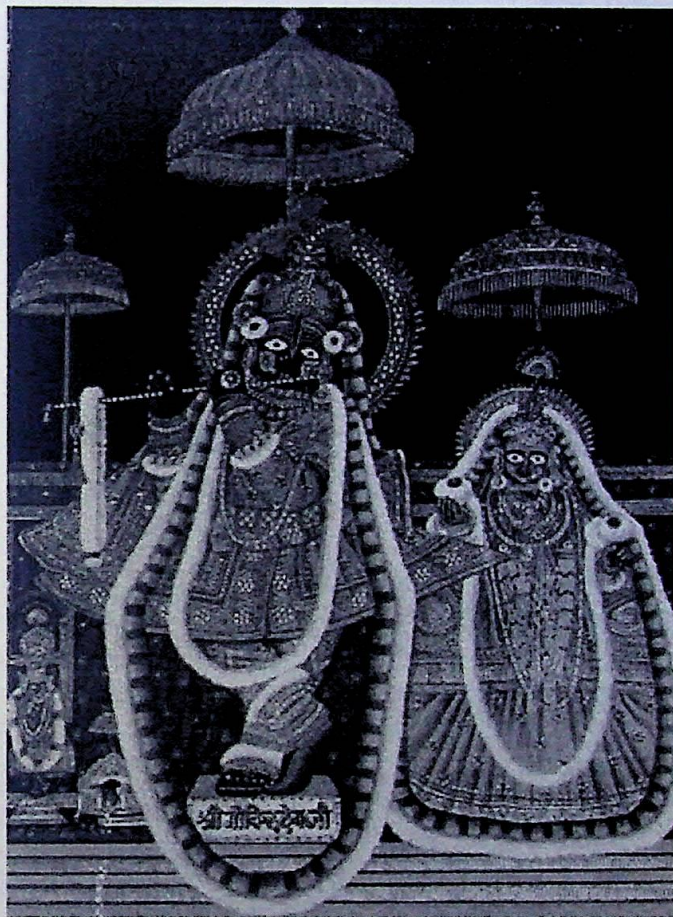


The Madana-mohana temple, a protected monument of the Archaeological Survey of India

⁷⁶ Madana-mohana complained about the lack of salt in the hard rotis which the Gosvāmī prepared day in and day out for the Deity to eat, and the Gosvāmī, in the depth of intimacy in this humorous exchange, told the Lord to be patient, as he was an old man busy with writing books, and could not supply endless varieties of snacks and sweets to this demanding child.

Shortly after the discovery of Madana-mohana, Rūpa Gosvāmī reestablished the worship of the centuries old Govindadeva Deity⁷⁷.

Carrying out Śrī Caitanya's desire was difficult at first, and Śrī Rūpa lamented his inability to do so. While sitting on the banks of the Yamunā River, Rūpa thought about the difficult task that lay before him. Just then, a young boy approached and asked the reason for his despondency. He told the boy of his mission to revive Vṛndāvana as a *Vaiṣṇava* place of pilgrimage. Further, he informed the boy of his mission to build wonderful temples for the worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and to establish a scholastic and literary community for the production of systematic theology. After hearing Śrī Rūpa's elaborate explanation, the young boy gestured that he should follow him, and he led Śrī Rūpa to a small hill.⁷⁸



Artistic representation of Rādhā Govinda,
the Deities found and worshipped by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

⁷⁷ *Purāṇic* records mention both of these Deities as having been originally installed by the great grandson of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Vajranābha, who ruled the area of Vraja at the beginning of the Kali-yuga. In subsequent raids by the Muslims, the Deities were hidden, and found by the Gosvāmīs in mystical ways, often through dreams and auspicious omens that led them to where the Deity was hidden.

⁷⁸ Steven Rosen, *The Six Gosvamis of Vrindavan*, pp. 98-99.

The boy said, “A marvelous cow comes to this place and sheds its milk. Think about what this means.” Listening to the boy’s melodious voice and gazing at his beautiful form, Rūpa fainted and fell to the ground. When he regained consciousness, he realized what had happened, called the villagers together, and told them that Kṛṣṇa as Govindadeva – the one praised in the scriptures as the presiding Deity of Vṛndāvana – was at this very place. They dug in the ground and found the black stone image of Govindadeva. (...) *Gauḍīya* sources usually date this event in 1533.⁷⁹

For the next many decades, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s followers and sympathizers were engaged in building a breathtakingly grandiose seven-storeyed temple for Govindadeva, and it was finally completed in 1590. The land, the red sandstone from Rajasthan, and architectural work were coordinated and sponsored by wealthy servants of the Mughal emperor Akbar (1542-1605), most notably his Hindu ally from Rajasthan, Raja Mān Singh of Amber (1540-1614). The building cost one crore rupees. Akbar issued land grants to as many as 35 temples in Vraja, and the temple of Govindadeva was treated as the center of royal patronage.



The kīrtana hall of the Govindadeva temple

⁷⁹ David L. Haberman, *Journey Through the Twelve Forests – An Encounter with Krishna*, p. 33.

In design, the Govindadeva temple, with its accentuated angles and openings, has been glorified as an innovation in the field of temple architecture. Historians and experts in architectural development have described it as “the most interesting and elegant edifice that Hindu India has ever produced at least in Upper India, and the only one perhaps from which a European architect might even borrow a few hints.”⁸⁰

Later on, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the Mughal kingdom was usurped by the tyrant Aurangzeb (1618-1707), great-grandson of Akbar. Akbar’s open-minded fascination with Hinduism was never appreciated at the Mughal court, and Aurangzeb took it upon himself to make the governance more strictly Islamic. The favorable royal support of Vṛndāvana declined; even more, many of the Vṛndāvana Deities were taken over the nearby Rajasthan border to safety and have narrowly avoided desecration.

The Deity of Madana-mohana is now worshipped in a small town in Rajasthan, Karoli, within the fortress built by the medieval rulers of that princely state. The temple of Govindadeva suffered at the hands of Aurangzeb’s soldiers and remains a relic of its past glory⁸¹, but the original Deities of Rādhā and Govinda have timely been moved to Jaipur and remain there to this day, gracefully receiving worship in a temple inside the king’s palace. Sadly, both of the original Gosvāmī temples, and many others, remained in disrepair for centuries⁸².

Often, the original temples in Vṛndāvana, the fate of which has now become the concern of a growing number of *Vaiṣṇavas*, host replicas of the original Deities, called the *pratibhū-mūrtis*. The oldest medieval temples in Vṛndāvana – among which the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple of Jīva Gosvāmī and the Rādhā-Ramaṇa temple of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī are the most frequent stops of the pilgrims, remain centers of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* worship and culture.

⁸⁰ Rosen, p. 101, quoting from the publication prepared by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Indian government, entitled *Temples of North India* (New Delhi, 1968) pp. 20-21.

⁸¹ Aurangzeb’s proclivity towards demolition of Hindu edifices is known. The shameful destruction of the Govindadeva temple was ordered out of the emperor’s sheer vanity. As he inspected his dominions from the roof of his palace in Agra, he was offended to notice, on the other bank of the Yamunā, that the many *dīpas* burning brightly atop the Govindadeva temple were higher than his palace. Enraged, he ordered the destruction of the three upper storeys of the temple. Even so, the *kīrtana* hall that was not demolished is in itself a few storeys high, and must have had wonderful acoustic effects.

⁸² It seems that after independence, the traditional forces in India have been overruled by the progressive parties seeking to uplift India with rapid industrial and economic development. Pandit J. L. Nehru declared that the dams on the sacred rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā were ‘the new temples of secular India’, and the development of the area of Vraja as an important Hindu pilgrimage site was stifled. While the dams and the industrial waste have damaged the sacred rivers beyond repair, the area of Vraja is now again waking up due to jolts received from worldwide interest in its heritage. Movements like ISKCON have spread the fame of Vṛndāvana around the globe, and pilgrim attendance – both native and foreign – is on the rise. However, some strategic vision and coordination could keep the harmful side effects of popularization out of the sacred place.

1. 1. 2. The Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana

The direct Gosvāmī disciples of Śrī Caitanya who have spent most of their lives in Vṛndāvana by his order, are traditionally referred to as “the Six Gosvāmīs”. Their approximate dates are usually given as follows⁸³. Rūpa Gosvāmī (1489-1564), Sanātana Gosvāmī (1488-1558), Jīva Gosvāmī (1513-1598), Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī (1495-1571), Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī (1505-1579), Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī (1503-1578).



The Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana

Their lives and teachings have left an indellible mark on the culture of Vṛndāvana, and are shaping the spiritual pursuits of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* for generations to come. A touching poem about them was composed by one of their contemporary students, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya⁸⁴.

nānā-śāstra-vicāraṇaika-nipuṇau sad-dharma-saṁsthāpakau
lokānāṁ hita-kāriṇau tri-bhuvane mānyau śaraṇyākarau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāravinda-bhajanānandena mattālikau
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau

⁸³ The dates are quoted from Steven Rosen's work *The Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvan*.

⁸⁴ Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was an influential member of the *Gauḍīya* line, who, after having studied under Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, was an extremely successful preacher in Orissa. This is verse two of his *Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka*. Translation is taken from *The Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*.

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Six Gosvāmīs, who are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus they are honored all over the three worlds, and they are worth taking shelter of because they are absorbed in the mood of the *gopīs* and are engaged in the transcendental loving service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

To this day, the influence of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is most visibly felt in Northeastern India, the home of his numerous followers and their descendants⁸⁵. Bengal and Orissa, and even Bangladesh, still reverberate with the memory of this exceptional saint and revolutionary⁸⁶. According to Mahāprabhu's own prediction, the chanting of the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, associated with the person who has triggered such a massive devotional movement in sixteenth-century India, has now spread throughout the world⁸⁷. This amazing historical development, besides being a natural outcome of the prediction, can be attributed to the openheartedness and broad vision of a few *Gauḍīya ācāryas*, most notably Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838-1914) and his illustrious son Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (1874-1936).

Nineteenth century Bengal was a hubbub of deliberation on religious matters. As a reaction to superstitious forms of Hinduism, the Christian missionaries flourished with their criticisms of certain Hindu social evils (while themselves remaining firmly rooted in the social evils of their own culture). The two worlds met, and to some within the Indian élite, the Western world suddenly had a greater appeal. The neo-Hindu movements sprang up, trying to justify the Vedic ways and social restraints, while trying to wash away the stain of impropriety from the face of Hindu *dharma*⁸⁸.

The current opinion in such circles was that the tenets of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism* preached by Śrī Caitanya centuries ago have been blurred with the overgrowth of improper practice, and it took an uncompromising saint of the stature of Śrīla

⁸⁵ The term *Gauḍīya* is actually geographic, it means "from Gauḍa, or Bengal". (*Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism* is thus synonymous with Bengal *Vaiṣṇavism*.) Although the two main centers of the *Gauḍīya sampradāya* are Bengal and Vraja, the term has come to designate all followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, regardless of origin or place of residence, and has recently been extended further even out of India.

⁸⁶ The same is reflected in the research works on Rūpa Gosvāmī and Bengal *Vaiṣṇavism* as well. Most of the Indian publications which address the *Gauḍīya sampradāya* have been done by natives of Bengal and Orissa. Of the three existing dissertations on Rūpa Gosvāmī done at Banaras Hindu University, two have been done by Bengali ladies (Rita Banerjee, 1972, and Devika Majumdar, 1995), while the first was done by Mrs. Premalata Sharma (in 1954) whose parents were actively involved in the mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

⁸⁷ *pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma, sarvatra pracāra hoibe mora nāma*, quotation from the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* of Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, Antya 4. 126.

⁸⁸ Most well-known are the Ārya Samāj started by Dayānanda Sarasvatī, Brahmo Samāj started by Rām Mohan Roy, and the Rāmākṣṣa Mission started by Swami Vivekānanda. An interesting study is available in: Harold G. Coward (Ed.), *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism* (Delhi, 1987).

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to purify the public assessment of *Vaiṣṇavism*.⁸⁹ His mission, the Gauḍīya Maṭh, was an impressive net of active missionaries and scholars owing allegiance to their outstanding *ācārya*. One of his direct disciples was Śrī Śrīmad A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda (1896-1977), the Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON, known to the world as the person who transplanted *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism* to the West.⁹⁰

The success of the movement in the West made news in India and helped Indians realize the hidden potential of their own *dharma*, holy places and culture. Today, every weekend, hundreds and thousands of visitors from Delhi pour into the sacred town of Vṛndāvana, between Agra and Mathurā. United efforts of foreign volunteers and native forces are waking up Vṛndāvana, out of the stupor of mindless pollution of the holy river Yamunā, and industrial development which does not have its place in the sacred *dhāma*.⁹¹



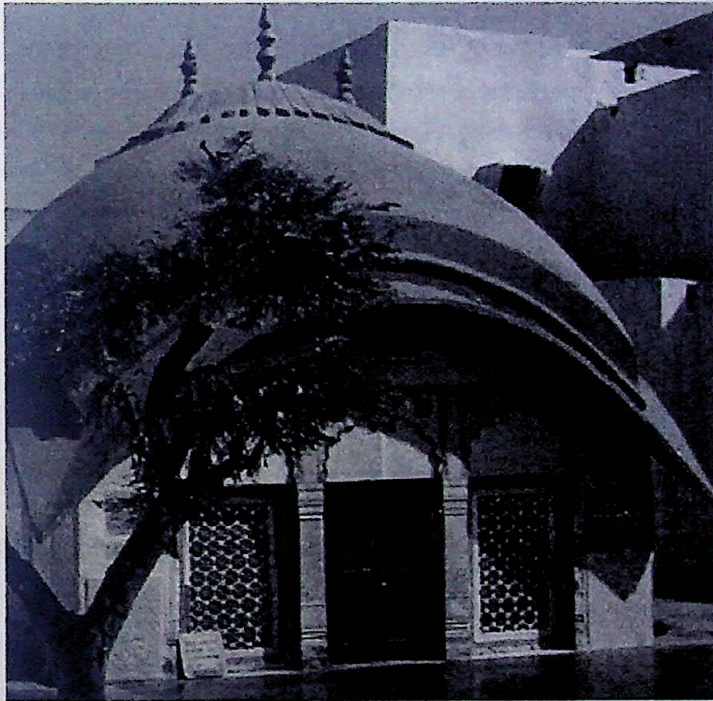
The Hill of Vyomāsura in Vraja, visited by pilgrims

⁸⁹ He was known to have chased impostor *Vaiṣṇavas* with a stick if he chanced to catch sight of them.

⁹⁰ According to internal information, ISKCON has more than 400 centers around the world, and its publication trust has to date distributed cca. 461,970,000 pieces of Vedic literatures worldwide. One of its precious publications is a devotionally inspiring summary study of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, entitled *The Nectar of Devotion*, translated into many major languages of the world.

⁹¹ Due to insensitivity of the authorities, a heavy truck traffic road goes right over the sacred Hill of Govardhana at Dāna Ghāṭī. *Sādhus* have often fought for the preservation of the holy sites, trying to ward off plans about using many hills in Vraja as building material. The plan of building a railway line directly over the Govardhana Hill was given up at the last moment due to exasperated protests from the local *sādhus*.

Yet even in the midst of the modern turmoil, so markedly characterized by turning away from traditional values, the holy town of Vṛndāvana still offers its shelter to the pilgrims greedy of spiritual experience. Resembling the atmosphere of the medieval community of *bhakti* saints who understood this sacred space to be the veritable copy of the divine abode of Goloka, the mood of Vṛndāvana brings the *bhakti-śāstras* to life, and makes them as meaningful as they were five hundred years ago, or five thousand. For centuries, *Vaiṣṇavas* of diverse *sampradāyas* have been approaching Vṛndāvana in the humble spirit of anticipation, hoping that the real spiritual Vṛndāvana will open up in front of their eyes. With the help of the written works of the Gosvāmīs, the preparation, both in theory and practice, is now easily available to any sincere seeker. With such a background, to visit Vṛndāvana, this child of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, and to see their magnificent temples and their *samādhi* tombs promises to be an experience of deep community with saints and Divinities only seemingly away from our vision.



Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Samādhi Tomb, Rādhā-Dāmodara Temple, Vṛndāvana

Understanding Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the traditional context will shed light on his unique position within the *sampradāya*, and explain the extreme levels of veneration directed at him even so many years after his physical departure. The introduction to the book *The Six Goswamis of Vrindavan*, of whom Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is the undisputed leader, opens with a straightforward revelation of their inner lives:

Although there are teachers who today carry the title “Goswami” or its derivative “Swami” (literally, “one who has mastered his senses”), they generally fall short of the standard set by the Six Gosvāmīs under discussion, who, according to the Vaiṣṇava tradition, are considered more than mere theologians or even great saints. They are eternal associates of the Lord, descending to assist Him in His mission of reclaiming the fallen, conditioned souls.

In this context, the Six Gosvāmīs are viewed as *mañjarīs*, the intimate maidservants and assistants of Rādhārāṇī in the spiritual world. There they engage in the highest service to the Lord by making various arrangements for His pleasure, and at the same time, in the terrestrial realm, they assist Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in making His mission accessible to the world at large.

Remembering throughout that the Gosvāmīs are actually *nitya-siddhas*, or “eternally liberated souls”, it becomes easier to understand their *līlā* (or “play”), as they each externally adopt the guise of ordinary human beings. Their inner meditation is always fixed on the lotus feet of the Lord. Given this reverential perspective, some biographical information will not stray our readers from the traditional understanding of the Gosvāmīs’ ontological position.

Through the dissertation, hopefully, the goal of the practice of *bhakti* for the followers of the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana will emerge in its sound logic and attractiveness. For someone who has experienced the blossoming of devotional sentiments in relation to the Supreme Lord, life beyond mere liberation becomes full of meaning and real relationships. In that real world of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has a place of unprecedented importance. As the leader of the young *gopīs* called *mañjarīs*, she, Rūpa Mañjarī, takes care of the combined service of the young maidens to the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, in *Goloka-dhāma*.

A close friend and colleague of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, the author of the *Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka* quoted above, was Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura. Melting Bengal with his mellifluous poems, he has dedicated many of his poetic outbursts to the ultimate perfection of life – entering the divine abode of Goloka as a servant of Śrī Rādhā under the shelter of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. One of his poems is a tribute to that most enigmatic personality of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya*.

*śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada
sei mor bhajana pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharāṇa
sei mora jīvaner jīvana*

*sei mora rasa-nidhi, sei mora vāñchā-siddhi
sei mora vedera dharama
sei vrata, sei tapa, sei mora mantra-japa
sei mor dharama karama*

*anukūla ha'be vidhi, se pade hoibe siddhi
nirakhibo ei dui nayane
śrī rūpa-mādhuri-rāśi, prāṇa-kuvalaya-śaśi
praphullito habe niśi dine*

*tuwā adarśana ahi, garale jārālo dehī
ciro dina tapita jīvāna
hā hā prabhu! koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā
narottama loilo śaraṇa*

The lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī are my real wealth. They are the object of my devotion and worship. They are the treasure of my heart, and they are my ornaments and the life of my life.

For me they are the reservoirs of all *rasa* and the conclusion of the religion of the *Vedas*. They are the fulfillment of all my desires and the goal of all my vows, my austerities, my religious activities, and the chanting of my *mantra*.

By the power of those lotus feet my activities will become favorable to devotion, I will achieve spiritual perfection, and with these two eyes I shall be able to actually see. Both day and night the exquisite beauty of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī will shine like the brilliant full moon upon the lotus of my heart, soothing my afflicted soul.

O Rūpa Mañjarī, the venom of the snake of separation from you has enfeebled my soul, and now my life is ever afflicted and distressed. Alas! Please have mercy and give me the shade of your lotus feet. Narottama dāsa has taken refuge.⁹²

Alongside – or rather above – the inner identity of the Gosvāmīs stands the esoteric understanding of the identity of their Master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1533)⁹³. The many biographies of this amazing saint, of which the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī are the most important and widely known, all reiterate the confidential understanding of the descent of Śrī Caitanya. He is venerated as the hidden incarnation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the role of His own devotee, or the combined incarnation of Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Couple worshipped by the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas*.

⁹² Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura's poems are preserved in two collections, the *Prārthanā* and the *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*. The quoted poem is from *Prārthanā*. Translations are taken from the *Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, Bhaktivedanta Vedabase.

⁹³ In his youth, he was known in native Nadiyā (today in West Bengal) by the title Nimāi Paṇḍita, while his given name was Viśvambhara. His parents were *brāhmaṇas*, Śrī Jagannātha Miśra and mother Śacī Devī. After taking *sannyāsa* in 1510, he was known as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His *sannyāsa guru*, Keśava Bhāratī, who gave him that name in the *sannyāsa* ceremony, justified it with the fame that has already spread about Mahāprabhu's contagious love of God: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya" means one who enlivens everyone with the chanting of the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

A beautiful *maṅgalācaraṇa* verse in the opening of the *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka*, composed by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, unfolds the mystery of Mahāprabhu's descent. It is quoted below, along with two verses composed by the intimate personal secretary of Śrī Caitanya, Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī⁹⁴.

*anarṇita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasāṁ sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanaḥ*

May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī (Śrī Caitanya) appear in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of pure devotion, the mellow of *mādhurya-bhakti-rasa*.

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtīr hlādinī-śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyaḥkhyam prakāṣam adhunā tad-dvayam caikyam āptaṁ
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*

The devotional love of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the transcendental manifestation of the Lord's internal *hlādinī-śakti*. Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one in Their identity, They separated Themselves eternally. Now these two personalities have again united, in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. I bow down to Him, who has manifested Himself with the sentiment and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī although He is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

*śrī-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā kīdṛśo vānayaivā-
svādyo yenādbhuta-madhurimā kīdṛśo vā madīyaḥ
saukhyam cāsyā mad-anubhavataḥ kīdṛśam veti lobhāt
tad-bhāvādhyāḥ samajani śacī-garbha-sindhau harīnduḥ*

Desiring to understand the glory of Rādhārāṇī's love, the wonderful qualities in Him that She alone relishes through Her love, and the happiness She feels when She realizes the sweetness of His love, the Supreme Lord Hari, richly endowed with Her emotions, appeared from the womb of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī, as the moon appeared from the ocean.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ After quoting these verses in his work, the author, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, bitterly adds: "All these conclusions are unfit to be disclosed in public. But if they are not disclosed, no one will understand them. Therefore I shall mention them, revealing only their essence, so that loving devotees will understand them but fools will not." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, 4. 231-32)

⁹⁵ All these three verses are included in the introductory chapters of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi-līlā, 1. 4-6, and the subsequent chapters)

Śrī Caitanya, during his sojourn in this world, was surrounded by thousands of committed followers. Due to the particular philosophical underpinning of the *sampradāya* and its cherished goal of attaining the intimate association of the Divine Couple in Their divine abode, these high-souled *Vaiṣṇavas* seemed to be expert at switching promptly between their present existence and the spirit-world of their cherished destination. Documenting these techniques for attaining the perfection of devotion, and entering the world made of devotional feelings was chiefly the work of Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīs.

Although highly qualified and not even considerably younger than their master, the Gosvāmī brothers were unequalled in their expressions of humility and submission to him. Mahāprabhu so orchestrated the turn of events that they were amply blessed by all of his other intimate associates who might perhaps feel surprised that the two brothers, without having much personal association of their master, are obviously extremely favored by him, to the point where he left the literary legacy of his creed in their hands, trusting them completely.

1. 1. 3. *Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Works*

A traditional list of his writings can be divided into the following categories⁹⁶:

- *bhakti-kāvya*
- *bhakti-nāṭya*
- philosophical and theological works

The works classified under *kāvya* include the *Padyāvalī*, an anthology of verses on *bhakti* collected personally by Rūpa Gosvāmī (some of the verses in the collection are his own as well), the *Haṁsadūta* and the *Uddhava-sandeśa*. All of his separate poems and glorifications (*Utkālikā-vallārī*, *Govinda-birudāvalī*, *Premendu-sāgara* to name a few, and various *aṣṭakas* in praise of the Lord) are collected in the *Stava-mālā*.

In the *nāṭya* category stand the three jewels of dramas on the theme of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, the two *nāṭakas*, *Lalita-mādhava* and *Vidagdha-mādhava*, and the shorter *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, a *bhaṇikā*. Rūpa Gosvāmī also penned a guide for *Vaiṣṇava* writers of drama, the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*.

Among his theological writings, the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is certainly most well-known. Its sequel, the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, purposely kept apart and away from the

⁹⁶ The list of works of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs is supplied by their nephew Jīva Gosvāmī at the end of his abridgement of Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. A reliable account of all the Gosvāmī writings, as well as their editions and translations published mostly in Bengal, is found in S. K. De, *Early History of Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, Calcutta 1961, pp. 146-165.

limelight, deals with the details of the highest expressions of devotion in the manner of the Vraja-gopīs, and is the reading material of *paramahamsas* who have overcome the urges of flesh. That work shall not detain us much⁹⁷. Another philosophical work useful to beginners in *bhakti* is his *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, while the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* was the divinely inspired outpouring of his brother, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. Another work of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, is a detailed list of the associates of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual abode of Goloka, a piece of information highly valued in the *sampradāya* which cherishes the return of the lost *jīvas* to that abode as its prime objective⁹⁸. Two of his concise collections of eleven verses are famous, one is the *Upadeśāmṛta*, compact advice to budding *sādhakas* on the path of *bhakti*, and the second the *Aṣṭa-kālīya-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotra*, describing the divine *līlā* in Goloka in the eight phases of the day⁹⁹.

We are here primarily concerned with the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* as the main works of the Gaudīya-sampradāya on Vaiṣṇava aesthetics. The most important commentators of Rūpa Gosvāmī's works on *bhakti-rasa* are the following:

- his nephew, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī commented on both *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (*Durgama-sangamanī-ṭīkā*) and *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (*Locana-rocanī-ṭīkā*), and devoted another work to the aesthetics of *rasa* (the *Rasāmṛta-śeṣa*), while also dealing with the topic of *bhakti-rasa* to some extent in his philosophical treatises *Prīti-sandarbhā* and *Bhakti-sandarbhā*,
- another member of the Caitanya-sampradāya, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura (beginning of the 18th century) also wrote commentaries on both of Rūpa Gosvāmī's works on aesthetics (the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu* and the *Ānanda-candrikā* respectively, while his *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi-kiraṇa* is a short summary of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*)

⁹⁷ While cautiously dealing with the *śṛṅgāra-rasa* in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī writes: *nivṛttānupayogitvād duruhatvād ayaṁ rasaḥ / rahasyatvāc ca saṁkṣīpya vitatāṅgo 'pi likhyate*, "Even though this *rasa* is extremely vast, it is discussed here only in abridged form, because it has a very secret nature, it is difficult to understand, and its detailed description is not useful for those who are averse to it due to equating it with mundane *śṛṅgāra*." (BRS. 3. 5. 2)

⁹⁸ It is extended to the associates of Śrī Caitanya in the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* by Śrīla Kavi Karpūra, matching both *līlās* and revealing all participants as having double perfectional roles.

⁹⁹ It served as a matrix to later Gaudīya ācāryas, for more detailed descriptions of the Goloka-līlā, used as literary props for *līlā-smaraṇa*. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is explicitly indebted to the *Aṣṭa-kālīya-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotra*, in his *Govinda-līlāmṛta*.

1. 2. The Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*¹⁰⁰, “The Ocean of the Nectar of Devotion”, is a literary religious-cum-aesthetic masterpiece in Sanskrit verses¹⁰¹. It is presented poetically as an ocean, divided into four cardinal directions, *vibhāgas*. In each of the *vibhāgas*, the chapters are called *laharīs* or waves¹⁰².

The first, *pūrva-vibhāga* or eastern side, introduces the three stages of attaining *prema* or love towards God: *sādhana-bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti*. Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes extensively from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, to give a foundation to the theory of *bhagavad-bhakti-rasa*. He states that *Kṛṣṇa-rati*, love towards Kṛṣṇa, is the *sthāyi-bhāva*, which, when intensified through the other components of the aesthetic experience, becomes *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*.

Dakṣiṇa-vibhāga or the southern side leads us through the concepts of aesthetic experience of the *Nāṭya-śāstra* to a life of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rūpa Gosvāmī defines and describes all the components of aesthetic experience, namely the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *sāttvikas*, *vyabhicārīs* and the *sthāyi-bhāva*.

Pāścima-vibhāga, the western side, deals with the *sthāyi-bhāva*, stated before to be *Kṛṣṇa-rati*: it is divided into five flavors according to the capacity of the devotees. Rūpa Gosvāmī thus conceives of the simultaneous unity and diversity within *bhakti-rasa*. He divides it into *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sākhya*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya* (*śṛṅgāra*). These are called *mukhya-rasas* in his system. The five kinds are successively more and more overwhelming and intimate. The classification criterium is the increasing sense of my-ness towards the Lord, and the subsequent decrease of awe, while the intimacy grows stronger.

Uttara-vibhāga or northern side treats the seven remaining *rasas* of Bharata (*hāsyā*, *karuṇā*, *raudra*, *vīra*, *bhayānaka*, *bibhatsa*), to which Rūpa Gosvāmī gives a subordinate position, stating that they attain the status of *bhakti-rasa* only when connected to *mukhya-kṛṣṇa-rati*.

¹⁰⁰ Numerous editions and a few translations have been published so far. Traditional editions of the *Gauḍīya śāstras* (set in Bengali characters) were done from the Radharaman Press, Berhampur and Murshidabad; by Haridāsa Dāsa of the Haribol Kuṭīr in Navadvīpa; and by Purīdāsa Mahāśaya, a scholarly disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. Another one of his disciples, Bhakti Hriday Bon Mahārāja, published a partial English translation of the BRS in 1965, not specifying the texts he worked with. S. K. De in his *History* (1961) uses the Radharaman Press edition (1924), and notices that another edition exists by Damodara Goswami published in the Achyuta Grantha Mala Series, Varanasi 1932. David Haberman’s translation (2003) utilizes the edition of Purīdāsa (which in turn was prepared from four different manuscripts) and takes additional help from the editions by Haridāsa Dāsa (Haribol Kuṭīr, Navadvīpa, 1945) and Śyāmadāsa Hakīm (Harināma Press, Vṛndāvana, 1981). The translators remark that there is very little disparity among the different manuscripts.

¹⁰¹ The last verses in it state that it was completed in the year 1541. S. K. De, p. 162.

¹⁰² S. K. De, p. 170-203, presents a summary of the contents of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. The list of *laharīs* of the four *vibhāgas* is given in a simple sketch in Appendix 1.

1. 3. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Definition of Bhakti

1. 3. 1. Verses from the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

In the writings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, we encounter a few related definitions concerning *bhakti*. For the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas, *bhakti* is closely connected to the terms *rati*, *āsakti*, *bhāva* and *premā*. All these often denote similar emotional states, but there are nevertheless slight nuances in the meaning. Most often, the difference lies in the intensity, or the gradual thickening of the spiritual sentiment up to its highest, purest expression. First, at the outset of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī sets the standard for pure devotion in two compact verses composed by himself.

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu- śīlanam bhaktir uttamā
kleśa-ghnī śubhadā mokṣa- laghutā-kṛt sudurlabhā
sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā

The highest form of *bhakti* is devoid of selfishness, and is never covered by speculative *jñāna* or ritualistic *karma*. *Bhakti* means to favorably serve and worship the Lord. Such *bhakti* wipes away all suffering, bestows all auspiciousness, it surpasses mere salvation, and it is extremely rare. It consists of concentrated bliss and it attracts the Lord. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1. 1. 11, 17)¹⁰³

The second *laharī* of the *pūrva-vibhāga* begins with the division of *bhakti* into three categories, *sādhana*, *bhāva* and *prema*. The definition of *sādhana-bhakti* is:

kṛti-sādhya bhavet sādhyā- bhāva sā sādhanābhidhā
nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya prakaṭyam hṛdi sādhyatā

Action of the senses, which produces the stage of *bhāva*, is called *sādhana-bhakti*. This attained state of *bhāva-bhakti* (*sādhyatā*) is an eternal *sthāyi-bhāva* which is not created, but simply manifests within the soul by the spiritual energy of the Lord. (BRS, 1. 2. 2)

The third *laharī* deals with *bhāva-bhakti*:

śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā prema-sūryāmśu-sāmya-bhāk
rucibhiś citta-māsṛṇya- kṛd asau bhāva ucyate

¹⁰³ I work with the English translations by Bhānu Swami (Chennai, 2006), Bon Mahārāja (Vṛndāvana, 1965) and David Haberman (New Delhi, 2003). Among the three, I choose a translation that sounds most convincing and well-formed, and at times add or detract parts of it, to facilitate smooth reading.

premṇas tu prathamāvasthā bhāva ity abhidhīyate
sāttvikāḥ svalpa-mātrāḥ syur atrāśru-pulakādayaḥ

That part of *bhakti* is called *bhāva*, whose essence is the *saṁvit* and the *hlādinī-śakti*; which is a ray of the sun of *premā* which will soon rise in the heart, and which softens the mind with its rays¹⁰⁴. *Bhāva* is the preliminary state of *premā*. At this point, a few *sāttvika-bhāvas* such as tears or horripilation may appear. (BRS, 1. 3. 1)

Bhāva or *rati* towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa is further explained in the following way:

āvirbhūyo mano-vṛttau vrajantī tat-svarūpatām
svayaṁ-prakāśa-rūpāpi bhāsamāna prakāśyavat
vastutaḥ svayaṁ āsvādaḥ svarūpaiva ratis tv asau
kṛṣṇādi-karmakāsvāda- hetutvaṁ pratipadyate

Appearing in the mental functions, *bhāva* becomes the mental state itself. Although *bhāva* is self-revealing, it appears to become manifest by the mind. Although in its essential nature *bhāva* is taste itself, it also acts as a cause of tasting the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His associates. (BRS, 1. 3. 4-5)

Rūpa Gosvāmī concludes the chapter dealing with *bhāva* with a few further descriptions of it. He speaks of it as '*lokottara-camatkāra-kārakaḥ sarva-śakti-daḥ*', as more amazing than anything in this world, and the bestower of all powers (BRS, 1. 3. 58). *Bhāva* is equated with *rati*, ripe attachment to the Lord.

ratir aniśa nisargoṣṇa prabalatarānanda pūrarūpaiva
uṣmānam api vamanī sudhāṁśu-koṭer api svadvī

Love (*rati*) is an abundant stream of bliss that continually pours forth warmth. Even though it is warm (because of the incessant desire to please the Lord), it is cooler and sweeter than a billion moons. (BRS, 1. 3. 61)

In the fourth *laharī* of the *pūrva-vibhāga*, Rūpa Gosvāmī describes the last stage, *premā*:

samyam masṛṇita-svānto mamatvātiśayāṅkitāḥ
bhāvaḥ sa eva sāndrātmā budhaiḥ premā nigadyate

When the *bhāva* softens the heart completely, and becomes extremely condensed, and when it is marked by a high degree of *mamatva* (possessiveness), it is called *premā* by the wise. (BRS, 1. 4. 1)

¹⁰⁴ Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, in his commentary *Durgama-saṅgamanī-ṭīkā*, glosses the word *rucibhiḥ* (by rays) as 'by desires for meeting the Lord, serving Him, attaining His friendship etc'. (Bhanu Swami, p. 357)

This wraps up the preliminary treatment of *bhakti* in its three stages in the four *laharīs* of the *pūrva-vibhāga*. His definitions of *bhāva-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti* are in consonance with the philosophical tenets of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism* which postulate, aside from the *jīvas* and the dull matter (*prakṛti*), a third energy of the Supreme Lord, generally known as the internal potency (*antaraṅgā-śakti*, *svarūpa-śakti*, *cit-śakti*, *daivī-śakti*)¹⁰⁵. That personal potency of the Supreme which is the support of the spiritual world and enhances the loving exchanges between the Lord and His pure *bhaktas*, is further divided into three categories, *saṁvit* (omniscience), *sandhinī* (omnipotence) and *hlādinī* (the potency of supreme joy, bliss). The revelation of *bhakti* in the individual heart is a flash of that internal *hlādinī* potency, which always exists in the pure spirit soul but is covered due to material contamination.

*nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhya' kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya*

Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, this love naturally awakens. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya 22. 107)

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī makes a similar point in his *Prīti Sandarbha*: *tasyā hlādinyā eva kāpi sarvānanda-atiśāyinī vṛttir nityaṁ bhakta-vṛndesu eva nikṣīpyamānā bhagavat-prītyākhyā vartate*. “An aspect of that *hlādinī-śakti* which has the ability to surpass all possible joy, is forever entrusted to the hearts of the qualified devotees, and is called *bhagavat-prīti*.”¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, its revelation must be preceded by qualification, and although the Gosvāmīs acknowledge rare cases of special grace of the Lord, the safe process remains humble *sādhana-bhakti*, which has the power to lead to *bhāva-bhakti* and on to *premā*.

*sādhanābhiniveśena kṛṣṇa-tad-bhaktayos tathā
prasādenāti-dhanyānām bhāvo dvedhābhijāyate
ādyas tu prāyikas tatra dvitīyo viralodayaḥ*

Bhāva appears in the hearts of the devotees in two possible ways: by absorption in *sādhana*, or, for the extremely fortunate, by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His devotees. The first is generally the case, the second is rare. (BRS, 1. 3. 6)

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary to the definition of *bhāva* in BRS, as a verse from *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 1. 12. 69: *hlādinī sandhinī saṁvit tvayy ekā sarva-saṁśraye*, “The three potencies *hlādinī*, *sandhinī* and *saṁvit* combined are the same internal energy of You who are the shelter of everything.”

¹⁰⁶ *Prīti Sandarbha*, quoted in: Jadunātha Sinha, *Jīva Gosvāmī's Religion of Devotion and Love* (Varanasi, 1983), p. 248.

A famous pair of verses in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* sketches the progressive development of qualification from *sādhana*, through *bhāva*, up to *premā*:

ādaṁ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttir syād tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
ātāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

In the beginning there must be faith (*śraddhā*). Then one becomes interested in associating with the devotees (*sādhu-saṅga*). Thereafter one is initiated by the spiritual master and begins to practice regulated *sādhana-bhakti* (*bhajana-kriyā*). Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits (*anārtha-nivṛtti*) and becomes firmly fixed in devotion (*niṣṭhā*). Thereafter, one develops a preliminary taste for serving the Lord (*ruci*), and later, spontaneous attachment to Him (*āsakti*). Gradually emotions intensify (*bhāva*), and finally there is an awakening of love (*premā*). (BRS, 1. 4. 5-6)

The scholastic tradition of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* invested its talents into elucidating these steps to *premā*. Of the works written for the orientation of the *sādhakas*, the *Mādhurya-kādambinī* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura (18th century), and the *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* and *Jaiva-dharma* of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (19th century) are most well-known. Another short work of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the *Upadeśāmṛta*, is a collection of advice for *sādhakas* from the first step to the highest, in eleven condensed verses. As is appropriate, these writings devote a great deal of attention to the stages leading to *niṣṭhā* (steady devotional practice), and scrutinizingly deal with the possible kinds of *anarthas*, or undesirable traits of character and behavior in a *sādhaka*. Only after *niṣṭhā* is attained, it finally becomes justifiable and meaningful to ruminate about one's budding sentiments towards the Lord.

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī closes the discussion on *premā* with the remark that these stages described so far, leading up to *premā*, which is indeed an extremely rare attainment, are the general guideline for ordinary mortals who stumble and climb up on the path of *sādhana-bhakti*. Further extraordinary refinements of *premā* may only develop within the spiritual body of a perfected devotee and not within the materially limited bodies we now inhabit. These higher stages of *premā* beyond the point of liberation have not been delineated in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (their technical names are *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*)¹⁰⁷. The last few levels of those are experienced only by the *nitya-siddha* associates of the Lord.

¹⁰⁷ They are described extensively in the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Chapters 15 and 16.

1. 3. 2. Other Devotional Scriptures on Bhakti

Other devotional scriptures offer similar descriptions of gradual progress in *bhakti*, and among them the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is certainly the most eloquent. A series of verses from its First Canto are an introduction to establishing a relationship with the Lord, analogous to the points expressed in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadraṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām
naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu nityam bhāgavata-sevayā
bhagavatṛ uttama-śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī
tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye
ceta etair anāviddham sthitam sattve prasīdati
evam prasanna-manaso bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ
bhagavat-tattva-vijñānam mukta-saṅgasya jāyate
bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi dṛṣṭa evātmanīśvare

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.

By regularly hearing the *Bhāgavata* and by rendering service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.

As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy. Thus established in the mode of unalloyed goodness, the man whose mind has been enlivened by contact with devotional service to the Lord gains positive scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead in the stage of liberation from all material association.

Thus the knot in the heart is pierced, and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions (*karma*) is terminated when one sees the self as master. (Bhāg. 1. 2. 17-21)

Another verse from the *Bhāgavata* connects the three main stages of devotion in a linear development: *śraddhā*, *rati* and *bhakti* (which is more or less identical to *śraddhā*, *bhāva* and *premā*):

satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati

In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually advances on the path of devotion, and faith (*śraddhā*), emotional attachment (*rati*) and pure devotion (*bhakti*) unfold in his heart one after another. (Bhāg. 3. 25. 25)

Within the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes extensively from other sources in accord with the *Gauḍīya-siddhānta*. He turns to the *Nārada-pañcarātra* for its definition of *bhakti*:

sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeṣa- sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate

Bhakti is defined as service to the Lord, the Master of the senses, by using one's senses. It should be done with the intention of pleasing the Lord, purified of other desires, and unobstructed by any *upādhis*. (Quoted in BRS, 1. 1. 12)¹⁰⁸

He supports his own definition of *premā* by a similar one from the *Pañcarātra*,

ananya-mamatā viṣṇau matatā prema-saṅgatā
bhaktir ity ucyate bhīṣma- prahlādoddhava-nāradaih

Prema-bhakti is defined by Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Nārada as that stage of *bhāva-bhakti* which has all possessiveness related to Viṣṇu (or any other form of the Lord) and to no one else. (Quoted in BRS, 1. 4. 2)

1. 4. Bhakti as a Means and an End in Itself

1. 4. 1. The Philosophical Frame of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism

Those not familiar with the rest of the *bhakti* movements and the ancient scriptural foundation of the philosophy of *bhakti* would perhaps understand Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of *uttamā-bhakti* as an independent intellectual endeavor. However, he, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, are not so much innovators but rather revivers of the full strength of *bhakti*, by bringing the jewel-like components of the notion into broad daylight. Their sharp intuition makes them the able interpreters

¹⁰⁸ In his commentary to this verse quoted within the BRS, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī compares it with the *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam* verse, indicating the correlations. He equates *tat-paratvena* with *ānukūlyena*, *sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ* with *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*, *sevanaṁ* and *anūsīlanam*, and *nirmalam* with *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*.

of the Vedic texts, for it is rather obvious that without such guidance the texts themselves may be confusing and contradictory. The history of Hinduism and the history of indology both testify to that confusion of goal and purpose. The Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs therefore sift through the Vedic, philosophical and Purāṇic material and select only parts that focus on *śuddhā-bhakti*. *Bhakti* is accepted as the *paribhāṣā* of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and other less central texts, or parts thereof, are not allowed to overpower their stress on pure devotion¹⁰⁹. In this strategic frame, the whole gamut of Vedic literature falls into place and agrees to submit to and encourage the most important of its principles, *śuddhā-bhakti*.¹¹⁰

The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* records a thread of arguments about the self-evident consistency of Vedic texts if and when they are properly understood. Veiled interpretation makes the scriptures lose their purpose and connectedness. During the times of Śrī Caitanya, the philosophical opponents of the superiority of *bhakti* were the followers of Śaṅkarācārya, but today the same role is also taken up by the academic scholars who deny any sound consistence to the whole traditional corpus of Vedic literatures.

*sarva-veda-sūtre kare kṛṣṇera abhidhāna
mukhya-vṛtti chāḍi' kaila lakṣaṇā-vyākhyāna
svataḥ-pramāṇa veda –pramāṇa-śiromaṇi
lakṣaṇā karile svataḥ-pramāṇatā-hāni*

In all the *sūtras* of *Vedānta*, it is Lord Kṛṣṇa who is to be understood, but the followers of Śaṅkarācārya have covered the real meaning of the Vedas with indirect explanations.

The self-evident Vedic literatures are the highest evidence of all, but if these literatures are interpreted, their self-evident nature is lost. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi, 7. 131-32)

¹⁰⁹ An example of scholarship in the wrong direction would be: Daniel P. Sheridan, *Advaitic Theism of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Delhi, 1986). The *Gauḍīya ācāryas* explain that the delusive focus on *jñāna* and *kaivalya* in the Eleventh and Twelfth Cantos of the *Bhāgavata* are meant to attract those whose minds were not captivated by the attractive features of the Lord in the Tenth Canto.

¹¹⁰ The medieval interpreters of the *śāstras* show an incredible level of sensitivity in dealing with etiquette and propriety. For example, Śrī Caitanya sharply denounced Vallabhācārya's attempt to override the perhaps faulty commentary on the *Bhāgavata* composed by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī. Being the head of the Govardhana Maṭh in Purī, a Śaṅkarite institution, Śrīdhara Svāmī may have been constrained by the philosophy of Śaṅkara when dealing with the delicate devotional text. However, Mahāprabhu chose to venerate Śrīdhara's commentary despite that possible stain, and Jīva Gosvāmī later, in his *Sandarbhāṣa*, gallantly offers an aside: "When Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī speaks in accordance with the *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta*, I have quoted his views."

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* itself, Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks about the relation of *bhakti* to the *Vedas*, making the whole Vedic canon submissive to Himself and supportive of His own mission of reclaiming the fallen souls to His Supreme abode.

*sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca
vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham*

I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the *Vedas*, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of *Vedānta*, and I am the knower of the *Vedas*. (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 15. 15)

1. 4. 2. Intellectual and Emotional Bhakti

Some would argue that the *bhakti* described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is of a more intellectual kind, not as exuberant and emotional as the later examples.¹¹¹ Western scholars seem to suggest a dichotomy between the older kinds of *bhakti* evidenced in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, in the life of Rāmānuja, and so on; and the more emotionally surcharged variety described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and exemplified by the Ālvārs and the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas*. Considering the fact that Rāmānuja fully acknowledges his debt to the Ālvārs, and is posterior to them, he can perhaps be allowed to be what he was, a strict *ācārya* with the benefit of the broad masses in mind.

The *Gauḍīya* line itself also admits that before Mādhavendra Purī, the supreme emotionalism of *madhura-rasa* was not yet available to the public, and this in itself was a reason for Mahāprabhu's descent. Some scholars consider the ecstatic *Vaiṣṇava* poets living in the centuries before Śrī Caitanya (for example, Jayadeva, Caṇḍīdāsa, Vidyāpati and Bilvamaṅgala) as the early swallows of the later emotional spring, but the fact remains that given their deep realization and insight into the perfectional stages of *bhakti*, they did not attempt to create a model of regulated practice of *bhakti* which would be able to catapult ordinary *jīvas* to the same heights of spiritual emotion. That work remains the credit of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs. These earlier devotional outpourings have been incorporated into their works, for example in the *Padyāvalī* of Rūpa Gosvāmī, and in the biographies of Śrī Caitanya, describing the heights of his emotional ecstasy upon hearing the heart-wrenching verses of previous devotional poets.

*amūny adhanyāni dināntarāṇi
hare tvad-ālokanam antareṇa*

¹¹¹ For example, a long discussion in Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha Bhakti – The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 36-48.

*anātha-bandho karuṇaika-sindho
hā hanta hā hanta katham nayāmi*

O My Lord, O friend of the helpless! You are the only ocean of mercy! Because I have not met You, My inauspicious days and nights have become unbearable. I do not know how I shall pass the time. (*Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* of Bilvamaṅgala, verse 41, quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya 2. 58)

To summarize, traditional *Gauḍīya* scholarship disagrees with propositions to the effect that *bhakti* has been *developing* into its more emotional variety according to the scenario presented by the Western scholars. Apart from the early medieval poets, numerous ancient traditional examples exist of devotees with high emotional susceptibility, but outside pious India, they are usually brushed aside as mere mythological fancies¹¹². The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* describes a great variety of emotional devotees like Nārada Muni, or the saintly boys Prahlāda and Dhruva whose existence should be traced back to the days of the Satya-yuga.

*kvacid rudati vaikuṇṭha- cintā-śabala-cetanaḥ
kvacid dhasati tac-cintā- hlāda udgāyati kvacit
nadati kvacid utkaṇṭho vilajjo nṛtyati kvacit
kvacit tad-bhāvanā-yuktas tanmayo 'nucakāra ha
kvacid utpulakas tūṣṇīm āste saṁsparśa-nirvṛtaḥ
aspanda-praṇayānanda- salilāmīlita-kṣaṇaḥ*

Prahlāda, his mind shaken due to deep meditation on the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, sometimes cried, sometimes laughed, sometimes expressed jubilation and sometimes sang loudly.

Sometimes [anticipating closeness in relationship with the Lord] Prahlāda Mahārāja would loudly call out. He sometimes lost his shyness in jubilation and began dancing in ecstasy, and sometimes, being fully absorbed in thoughts of the Lord, he felt oneness and imitated the pastimes of the Lord.

Sometimes, he became spiritually jubilant and remained silent, his hairs standing on end and tears gliding down from his half-closed eyes because of his love for the Lord.

(Bhāg. 7. 4. 37, 38, 41)

¹¹² Here, we need to juxtapose the two different notions of human progress in Western and ancient Indian culture: while the Western scholars usually study ancient India with the preconceived notion that it was a primitive stage in the development of humanity towards Christian monotheism, scientific development and modern culture, the ancient Indians see the world move through the cycles of *yugas* where the spiritual susceptibility, moral uprightness, and refinement of culture all diminish and deteriorate. The Indian spiritual movements therefore try to reenact the atmosphere of the previous *yugas* more conducive to spiritual advancement, and human progress is judged by the human ability to comply with the traditional ancient standards of piety and *dharma*.

Speculations about the more intellectual beginnings in the ancient history of *bhakti*, and its development into a more emotional variety thus overlook the abundance of traditional examples, and impose Western ideas of historical development onto ancient Indian religious history. Traditionally, the *Purāṇas* do not evolve from the more intellectual *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* to the later more emotional *Bhāgavata*, but are merely different points of view and different cross-sections from the rich panorama of ancient Indian religious history, due to the differing mindsets of either the listeners or the speakers, where I always mean the traditionally accepted *ṛṣis* like Śaunaka, Śukadeva and Vyāsadeva. Differing levels of emotionalism exist in every sane culture, and ancient Indian culture as well should finally free itself from the tight grip of motivated Western scholarship.

But even the famous verses in the *Bhagavad-gītā* itself, describing the emotional fervor of the devotees and the ready reciprocation of the Lord, should be able to revert these insinuations of later emotionalism. A scripture of seven hundred verses can hardly be more eloquent about emotional *bhakti*:

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādīm avyayam
satataṁ kīrtayanto mām yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate*

O son of Pṛthā [Arjuna], those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They worship Me without deviation because they know Me as the Supreme Person, original and inexhaustible.

Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion. (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 9. 13-14)

*aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ
mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca mām nityaṁ tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca
teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te
teṣāṁ evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jam tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*

I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My service and worship Me, their hearts imbued with emotion.

The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me.

To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.

To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance. (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 10. 8-11)

1. 4. 3. *Bhakti Surpasses Mere Liberation*

The *śuddhā-bhakti* of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* is at the same time the *sādhana* and the *sādhya*, the means to the goal and the final goal itself. That should be borne in mind as one of the most distinguishing characteristics of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism*, putting it apart from popular Hinduism which often considers *bhakti* as a mere means to all kinds of goals, from trifle successes in the mundane sphere up to *mokṣa*, the fourth and last *puruṣārtha* according to ordinary Hindu values. One of the most extraordinary qualities of *śuddhā-bhakti* is that it makes liberation (*mokṣa* or *mukti*) – commonly understood in Hinduism as a most desirable, and final spiritual goal – appear utterly insignificant. Let us inspect a few scriptures with statements about the superior position of *bhakti*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* puts *bhakti* above mere peace or liberation, making it the king of all processes of self-realization.

brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām

One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure *bhakti* unto Me. (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 18. 54)

puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha
bhaktiḥ sa labhyas tv anyathā

The Supreme Person, who is greater than all, is attainable by unalloyed devotion. (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 8. 22)

The *Bhagavad-gītā* does not shine like a lone star in the empty firmament, it is surrounded by a galaxy of other scriptures, more or less contemporary to the time of the *Gītā*¹¹³. For the *bhakti* movements, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is certainly the main

¹¹³ The dates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are traditionally understood as being 3227-3102 B.C. Much of today's Western scholarship ignores the traditional time scale completely, and pushes down the dates of the *Bhagavad-gītā* into much more recent times, although it is usually agreed upon that the cross-textual examinations show its existence at least a few centuries before Christ.

inspiration¹¹⁴. Simply by reading or hearing it, devotion to the Lord is potently aroused. Many of its exquisite verses speak of the superiority of *bhakti* over *mukti*, and many of them, in turn, are quoted in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1. 1. 33-40, and 1. 2. 22-57). The following verse is from the Third Canto, from the teachings of the Lord's incarnation Kapila who extensively spoke about *bhakti-yoga*:

*naikātmataṁ me spṛhayanti kecin mat-pāda-sevābhiratā mad-ihāḥ
ye 'nyonyato bhāgavatāḥ prasajya sabhājayante mama pauruṣāṇi*

Pure devotees who are attached to being engaged in My worship and eager to attain My association, never desire to become one with Me. They meet with like-minded saints and glorify My pastimes. (Bhāg. 3. 25. 34, quoted in BRS, 1. 2. 27)

*mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau
lakṣaṇaṁ bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam
ahaituky avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame
sālokya-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya- sārūpyaikatvam apy uta
dīyamānaṁ na gṛhṇanti vinā mat-sevanaṁ janāḥ*

The sign of pure, unadulterated devotion is that one's mind is at once attracted to hearing the transcendental name and virtues of the Supreme Godhead, who is residing in everyone's heart. Just as the water of the Ganges flows naturally down towards the ocean, such devotional ecstasy, uninterrupted by any material condition, flows towards the Supreme Lord. Pure devotees do not hanker for any kind of liberation – *sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, *sāmīpya*, *sārūpya* or *ekatva* – even though they are offered to them by the Supreme Lord. (Bhāg. 3. 29. 11-13)

The famous commentator of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, utters a similar proclamation, freeing himself from the stigma of *advaitic* admixture¹¹⁵:

*tvat-kathāmṛta-pāthodau viharanto mahā-mudāḥ
kurvanti kṛtinaḥ kecit catur-varga-tṛṇopamam*

¹¹⁴ Traditionally, its origin is put into the times of the departure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa from this world (which corresponds to the beginning of the Kali-yuga, at midnight on February 18, 3102 B.C.): *kṛṣṇe svadhāmopagate dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha / kalau naṣṭa-dṛśāṁ eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*, "This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion and knowledge. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*." (Bhāg. 1. 3. 34)

¹¹⁵ The topic will be tackled in Chapter 6, under the work of Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī, who subsumes *bhakti* under the existing four *puruṣārthas*, considering it either part of *dharma* or *mokṣa*. That is exactly what the *Gauḍīya* scholars are so upset about, namely making *bhakti* subservient and a means only to the *advaitic* ends.

Some fortunate people play in the sweet ocean of topics about You and enjoy the greatest bliss. They consider the happiness of *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* to be as insignificant as grass. (*Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* on *Bhāg.* 10. 88. 11, quoted in BRS, 1. 1. 40)

Other works reiterate similar points, for example, the *Mukunda-mālā-stotra*, a collection of Sanskrit glorifications by one of the South Indian *bhakti* saints (the Ālvārs), King Kulaśekhara.

alam alam alam ekā prāṇinām pātakānām
nirasana-viṣaye yā kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti vāṇī
yadi bhavati mukunde bhaktir ānanda-sāndrā
kara-tala-kalitā sā mokṣa-sāmrājya-lakṣmīḥ

By themselves the words 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa' are sufficient to drive away the sins of all living beings. Anyone who possesses devotion for Lord Mukunda that is densely imbued with ecstasy, holds in the palms of his hands the gifts of liberation, worldly influence, and wealth. (*Mukunda-mālā-stotra*, verse 51)

A beautiful verse from the *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* by Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura¹¹⁶ is filled with the strength of devotion:

bhaktis tvayi sthīratarā bhagavān yadi syād
daivena naḥ phalati divya-kīśora-mūrtiḥ
muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjali sevate 'smān
dharmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ samaya-pratīkṣāḥ

O Lord! If our devotion to You is undeviating, then Your ever-youthful form will spontaneously manifest within our heart. At that time liberation (*mukti*) personified will serve us like a maidservant, and *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* will humbly await our bidding. (*Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, verse 107)

1. 5. Bhakti as a Means Only

1. 5. 1. The Śāṅkarite Understanding of Bhakti

In the light of the above, it is interesting to notice works about *bhakti* that put *mukti* above it as the final goal. Most often that is the result of the influence of

¹¹⁶ Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu toured around India extensively. On his way, he was delighted to secure two rare devotional manuscripts, and he had them copied to take them back to Bengal. Both of them, the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, and the *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* of Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, are in full agreement with the tenets of the *bhakti* path, stressing the superiority of *bhakti* over the ordinary four *puruṣārthas*.

Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, who remains very influential in India, and even abroad is widely accepted as the spokesperson for the entire Hindu tradition.

The distinguishing characteristic of the monist way of understanding *Vedānta* is its stress on the force of *avidyā* (or *māyā*) which covers the pure spirit, Brahman. By the pursuit of *jñāna*, knowledge of spirit, and *viveka*, discrimination, the individual soul wakes up in self-realization and stops mistakenly believing the mundane world to be true. The mundane world is false, according to Śaṅkara, and is a product of only a virtual transformation of spirit, in Sanskrit called *vivarta*. The material existence is compared to a dream, and emotional reactions to its appearances are likened to being afraid of a snake in the dark room, which turns out to be only a curl of a rope¹¹⁷.

The *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* understanding of the world, on the other hand, is built on its axiomatic acceptance of the supreme reality of the spiritual world, and the Supreme Lord as the overseer and independent eternal Being, while the lesser *devatās* are His helpers who activate the temporary, but real, material world. The world, according to Śrī Caitanya, is a real transformation of spirit, in Sanskrit *pariṇāma*. In *Gauḍīya* philosophy as well, *māyā* refers to the agency of the Supreme Lord which deludes the *jīvas* who are intent on forgetting their real position as servants of the Supreme. *Māyā* therefore has a place in *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy as well, and is not the exclusive property of the Śaṅkarites. A slight confusion arises when these foundational differences remain unacknowledged, for example, an introductory presentation of the *bhakti* poet Narsī Mehtā seems to conclude that the notion of *māyā* in his poems is a borrowing from Śaṅkara:

In some of his songs, there is a strong influence of Śaṅkara's idea of the world being an illusion.

*In sleep I see this world full of pleasures,
But when I awake, there is nothing.
Existence and Soul are one,
They are like Brahman before Brahman.*

In other poems, Narsī seems to favor the early *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy of Viṣṇusvāmī that all existence is real and forms parts of the Universal aspect of Kṛṣṇa:

*Oh Hari! This entire Universe is You,
All forms are Your forms.
In the body You are the soul,*

¹¹⁷ This is the famous example of *adhyāropa*, or superimposition. Points summarized from: Swami Nikhilananda (Tr.) *The Vedānta-sāra of Sadānanda* (Calcutta 1997). *Vedānta-sāra* is a classical medieval text on the tenets of the school of Śaṅkara. A reliable overview of the differences in interpretation between Śaṅkara and the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* is given in: Swami Tapasyānanda, *Bhakti Schools of Vedānta* (Chennai, 2003).

In the sun You are the brightness,
In space You are the sound,
That we hear in the Vedas.¹¹⁸

The *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy also relates to the impersonal aspect of the Supreme but makes it clearly inferior to the Supreme Person. The energies of the Supreme Lord in the *Gauḍīya* philosophy are divided into three categories, the external (*māyā*), the internal (*yoga-māyā*, *daivī-śakti*) and the marginal energy consisting of the *jīvas*, prone to seek shelter in either the external or the internal energy.¹¹⁹ Illusion according to the *Vaiṣṇavas* is to approach the outer world as if it was unrelated with the Supreme Lord, but as soon as the consciousness of the *jīva* is adjusted to the overlordship of the Supreme, and bonded with Him in devotion, all parts of creation fall into place. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa puts it,

*mahātmānas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādīm avyayam*

O son of Pṛthā [Arjuna], those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Person, original and inexhaustible. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9. 13)

The relationship between the *jīva* and Brahman is equality according to Śāṅkara, and the *Vaiṣṇavas* do not entirely disagree but qualify it with the stress on the infinitesimal quantity of the *jīvas*. The relation between the individual spirit and the Supreme Spirit is most fully described by the ripe *acintya-bhedābheda-siddhānta* of Śrī Caitanya, acknowledging the spiritual nature of every *jīva* qualitatively equal to Brahman. But since the individual *jīva* is infinitesimal in size, it is never, even after liberation, in a position to be fully equal to the independent Īśvara, Supreme Lord, as the ultimate creator, destroyer and maintainer of the whole existence.

The goal of the philosophy of Śāṅkara is the unveiling of the pure spirit, and its realization of oneness with the light of Brahman. Śāṅkara prescribes standard options as the paths to the goal, namely, *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*, clearly favoring *jñāna* among them as the highest means to attain *mukti*. But the divine personalities of the Hindu pantheon are according to Śāṅkara all subsumed under the vague notion of Īśvara, or *saguṇa* Brahman, and ultimately lose any importance since the goal of practice is to merge with the *nirguṇa* Brahman, a mere spiritual effulgence. The importance of *bhakti*, then, is only temporary, in the so-called *vyāvahārika* stage, or the stage of practice. Perfection, or the *pāramārthika* level, is characterized by the absence of any *upādhis* (limiting adjuncts), which are attributed to the *devatās* as

¹¹⁸ From: Swami Mahadevananda, *Devotional Songs of Narsī Mehtā* (Delhi, 1985), p. 11.

¹¹⁹ According to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 6. 7. 61: *viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā / avidyā-karma-saṁjñānyā tṛtīyā śaktiḥ iṣyate*.

well in Śaṅkara's thought. Here, first of all, we meet with a blurred distinction among the different levels of *jīvas*¹²⁰, and a further confusion about the supremacy among the many divinities, which is resolved only because the issue ultimately does not matter at all¹²¹. Let us look at an interesting compilation, a recent collection of *sūtras* on *bhakti*. The influence of Śaṅkara's ideas will be evident immediately.

Parā-bhakti-sūtrāṇi

(*svāmi-hariharānandāraṇya-praṇītāni*)¹²²

1) *atha bhakti-tattvānuśāsanam*

Here begins the consideration of *bhakti-tattva*.

2) *iṣṭā mahāpuruṣa-saṁsthā bhaktiḥ*

Bhakti refers to being situated in the consciousness of the desired Deity.

4) *tvam-pada-lakṣye rāgātmikāparā*

Fixed in the meaning of the word *tvam* (from the *mahā-vākya* "tat tvam asi"), such *bhakti* is characterized by attachment, and it is inferior (*aparā*).

5) *pratyag ātmani pratiṣṭhā parā*

Being grounded in the Supreme Soul is the superior form of *bhakti* (*parā*).

8) *tatra sukhopaviddhāparā*

The inferior form of *bhakti* is ascertained by the presence of happiness (in the devotee).

9) *śānty -upaviddhā parā*

The superior form of *bhakti* is ascertained by the presence of peace.

¹²⁰ The demigods like Indra and Brahmā may still be *jīvas*, but are in a much more highly developed state of existence, able to influence and manage the living conditions of the tiny *jīvas* of the universe.

¹²¹ This same confusion is perpetuated by many neo-advaitic movements of today, who gather a rich variety of followers under their broad umbrella of indifference to the actual supremacy of any divinity, seeking to even subordinate the various *Vaiṣṇava* understandings of *Vedānta* to the final word of *advaita*.

¹²² Published in: Acharya Baladeva Upadhyaya, *Śāṇḍilya-bhakti-sūtram Bhakti-candrikayā samanvitam* (Varanasi, 1998), pp. 87-88.

well in Śaṅkara's thought. Here, first of all, we meet with a blurred distinction among the different levels of *jīvas*¹²⁰, and a further confusion about the supremacy among the many divinities, which is resolved only because the issue ultimately does not matter at all¹²¹. Let us look at an interesting compilation, a recent collection of *sūtras* on *bhakti*. The influence of Śaṅkara's ideas will be evident immediately.

Parā-bhakti-sūtrāṇi

(*svāmi-hariharānandāraṇya-praṇītāni*)¹²²

1) *atha bhakti-tattvānuśāsanam*

Here begins the consideration of *bhakti-tattva*.

2) *iṣṭā mahāpuruṣa-saṁsthā bhaktiḥ*

Bhakti refers to being situated in the consciousness of the desired Deity.

4) *tvam-pada-lakṣye rāgātmikāparā*

Fixed in the meaning of the word *tvam* (from the *mahā-vākya* "tat tvam asi"), such *bhakti* is characterized by attachment, and it is inferior (*aparā*).

5) *pratyag ātmani pratiṣṭhā parā*

Being grounded in the Supreme Soul is the superior form of *bhakti* (*parā*).

8) *tatra sukhopaviddhāparā*

The inferior form of *bhakti* is ascertained by the presence of happiness (in the devotee).

9) *śānty -upaviddhā parā*

The superior form of *bhakti* is ascertained by the presence of peace.

¹²⁰ The demigods like Indra and Brahmā may still be *jīvas*, but are in a much more highly developed state of existence, able to influence and manage the living conditions of the tiny *jīvas* of the universe.

¹²¹ This same confusion is perpetuated by many neo-advaitic movements of today, who gather a rich variety of followers under their broad umbrella of indifference to the actual supremacy of any divinity, seeking to even subordinate the various *Vaiṣṇava* understandings of *Vedānta* to the final word of *advaita*.

¹²² Published in: Acharya Baladeva Upadhyaya, *Śāṇḍilya-bhakti-sūtram Bhakti-candrikayā samanvitam* (Varanasi, 1998), pp. 87-88.

10) *aparayā parā-niṣpattiḥ*

By the practice of *aparā-bhakti*, *parā-bhakti* is attained.

13) *ruci-vaicitryād praśānta-śānta-dāsyādayo bhāvāḥ*

According to a variety of personal preferences, the moods in *bhakti* can be *praśānta*, *śānta*, *dāsyā* and so on.

14) *śreṣṭhaḥ praśānta-bhāvaḥ, śānter niratiśayotkarṣatvāt*

The best is *praśānta* (deep peace), due to its being the highest form of peace.

15) *vikṣipta-cetasāṁ bāhyejyā*

Those with unsubdued minds should perform external forms of worship.

16) *rāgasya cira-saṅga-nimittatvāt tato dṛḍhā ratiḥ*

The durability of attachment causes firmness in love.

17) *dṛḍha-rateś cetara-viraktasyāntarejyā*

Due to firm love, those who are not attached to anything else any more can afford to perform worship internally.

22) *bhajanīya-tattva-jñānaṁ sālokyādayaś ca tat-phalam*

The fruit of such worship is either full knowledge of one's worshipable object, or liberation like *sālokya* and so on.

23) *tattva-jñānāc chāntātmādhigamam*

From full knowledge of one's worshipable object appears the attainment of peace for the soul.

24) *samyag viraktasya tan-mātra-saṁsthā parā-bhaktiḥ*

Parā-bhakti is exactly that state, attained by one who is fully renounced.

25) *śāśvac-chāntiḥ kṣayātisaya-hīnā tat-phalam*

Eternal peace, devoid of any limit or end, is its fruit.

The collection of *sūtras* quoted above immediately reveals many notions foreign to *Vaiṣṇava* forms of *bhakti*:

- it puts mere peace above the pure relationships with the Divinity
- it does not distinguish between attachment to God and other attachments, thus in effect making attachment to God and the happiness generated by it to be equal to mundane attachment and happiness,
- it considers personal forms of liberation inferior to the attainment of peace (*aikatva*)
- it prescribes external worship to those seemingly unable to perform the internal one, in accordance with the tenets of Śāṅkara about the *vyāvahārika* level of *saguṇa* worship
- it talks of firm love (*dṛḍhā ratī*), but disposes of it in the end.

A verse attributed to Hanumān is quoted in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*bhava-bandha-cchide yasmin sprhayāmi na muktaye
bhavān prabhur ahaṁ dāso iti yatra viluḥpyate*

I do not desire liberation that cuts the bondage of material life, because in the state of liberation, awareness that You are the master and that I am the servant disappears. (Quoted in BRS, 1. 2. 49)¹²³

The famous verse that credits the attractive features of Śrī Hari's personality with the ability to lure even the sages of highest equipoise into *bhakti*, is found in the First Canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

*ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim itthaṁ-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ*

All different varieties of self-satisfied sages who are already beyond following the scriptural rules and regulations are attracted to worshipping the Lord in pure devotion because of His overpowering virtuous nature. (Bhāg. 1. 7. 10, quoted in BRS, 1. 2. 54)

Standard examples from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* itself of persons who switch from their initial fascination with the impersonal feature of the Lord to an active relationship with His all-attractive personality include the famous speaker of the

¹²³ I was unable to find the source of the verse in the current editions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The verse in the BRS is preceded by an introductory praise: *yadṛcchayā labdham api viṣṇor dāśarathes tu yaḥ / naicchan mokṣaṁ vinā dāsyam tasmai hanumate namaḥ* "I offer my respects to Hanumān, who did not want liberation, which Dāśarathi Rāma could easily give him, but instead prayed for servitude."

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS

Bhāgavata, son of Vyāsadeva, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and the four Kumāras, sons of Brahmā.

In the time span between the original recitation of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* at the beginning of the Kali-yuga, and the advent of Śrī Caitanya in the sixteenth century, the greatest obstacle to the pure understanding of *bhakti* has been articulated by Śrīpāda Śāṅkarācārya in the ninth century. Although scholars argue about the actual level of indifference to *bhakti* among the contemporary *daśanāmī sannyāsīs*¹²⁴, it is a fact that taken to the letter, Śāṅkara's philosophy tends to, more or less harshly, pull down *bhakti* from its supreme and independent position into a mere means to the goal of attaining liberation.

Therefore, much of what the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana wrote was directed at counteracting the influence of Śāṅkarācārya, who, as indicated above, relativized the paramount importance of a lively, emotional relationship with the Supreme Lord in His personal form. The philosophical treatises of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī (named the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhas*) address these issues fully, and advance the arguments from the starting ground of *tattva* to *brahman*, *paramātmā* and *bhagavān* as the ascending levels of understanding the Absolute. Here, the guiding light is an important verse from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1. 2. 11):

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*

Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān.

According to the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* philosophy expounded in the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhas*, the Supreme Absolute reveals itself according to the capacity of the observer at first as the depersonalized Brahman effulgence, then the localized Paramātmā in the hearts of all beings, and finally as the Supreme Lord endowed with all opulences in their fullest extent, with His own abode in the spiritual sky, of which the whole material creation is but a foggy corner part. These three phases in understanding the Absolute correspond to the three famous qualities of the Supreme, namely *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, and all three are fully present only in the personal spiritual form of the Supreme Lord approachable by the pure devotees.

*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

¹²⁴ For example, in an article of Wade H. Dazey, "The Role of Bhakti in the Daśanāmī order", in: Karel Werner (Ed.), *Love Divine – Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism* (Durham, 1993), pp. 147-172. The observation is that many of the *sannyāsīs* revert to popular forms of Hinduism prevalent in their environment, either considering them vital to their own development, or as part of the goodwill and friendly relations to other religious institutions within the Hindu sphere.

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself, with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love. (*Brahma-saṁhitā*, 5. 38)

1. 5. 2. The Historical Upgrading of Religious Understanding

The *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* venerate the contribution of Śrī Caitanya as the summit of theological advancement and refinement in the Kali-yuga¹²⁵. The traditional sequence is the appearance of Lord Buddha, to lure the masses away from Vedic sacrifices which cannot be performed properly anymore and are being misused for violence to animals¹²⁶. Later, Śaṅkara appears to bring the Indians back to Vedic scriptures, although he interprets them in a way that opposes pure theism. After Śaṅkara come the four *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas*¹²⁷, each with his own way of refuting Śaṅkara, to establish the Supremacy of the Supreme Lord in His full opulence and distinct spiritual personality. As the sum of all these previous refutations, Śrī Caitanya introduces the highest form of an emotional relationship with the Lord, documented in the writings of the Gosvāmīs.

Traditionally, the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* relate to Śaṅkarācārya in the light of a series of verses from the *Padma Purāṇa*, which indicate his mission as bewildering the people of Kali-yuga¹²⁸.

*māyāvādam asac chāstram pracchannaṁ bauddham ucyate
mayaiva kalpitaṁ devi kalau brāhmaṇa-rūpiṇā
brahmaṇaś cāparaṁ rūpaṁ nirguṇaṁ vakṣyate mayā
sarva-svaṁ jagato 'py asya mohanārthaṁ kalau yuge*

¹²⁵ Within the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, evidence for the appearance of Śrī Caitanya is found in the prayers of Prahlāda Mahārāja (Bhāg. 7. 9. 38) where he refers to a hidden incarnation of the Lord in Kali-yuga, or, more explicitly, the verse from the Eleventh Canto (Bhāg. 11. 5. 32), *kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam / yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ* "In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of the Lord who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions.

¹²⁶ Buddha is mentioned in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, in its list of incarnations of the Lord (1. 3. 24), and in the invocatory prayers entitled the *Daśāvatāra-stotra* in the opening of Jayadeva's *Gīta-govinda*.

¹²⁷ A verse in the *Padma Purāṇa*: *śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakāḥ vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-pāvanāḥ / catvāras te kalau bhāvyaḥ hy utkale puruṣottamāt*, "In Kali-yuga, the four *Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas* are the purifiers of the earth, and they will appear in Utkala (Orissa) by the will of Puruṣottama (Jagannātha)."

¹²⁸ *Gauḍīya* texts that quote these and similar verses from the *Purāṇas* are the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja (*Madhya*, 6. 180-82), *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* of Sanātana Gosvāmī (1. 3. 39-40, and 2. 3. 108-111), *Paramātmā Sandarbha* of Jīva Gosvāmī (*Anuccheda* 71. 14), and the *Caitanya-maṅgala* of Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura (Chapter 2).

The *Māyāvāda* philosophy, Lord Śiva informed his wife Pārvatī, is impious [*asac chāstra*]. It is covered Buddhism. My dear Pārvatī, in Kali-yuga I assume the form of a *brāhmaṇa* and teach this imagined *Māyāvāda* philosophy. In order to cheat the atheists, I describe the Supreme Person to be without form and without qualities. (*Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttara-kāṇḍa* 236. 7, 10)

Śaṅkarācārya is a mystery in many ways, and comprehending his exact stance on *bhakti* is just one of the difficulties¹²⁹. An interesting twist happens when his followers and sympathizers dilute the sharpness of his philosophy and give more place and dignity to *bhakti* than the original philosophical writings of Śaṅkara would indicate. A case of this sort will be dealt with in Chapter 6, under Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

Along the same lines, in the scholarly assessment of the authenticity of the devotional *stotras* attributed to Ādi Śaṅkara, many teeth have already been broken¹³⁰. While the scholars helplessly go on arguing about their authorship, at least as far as the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* is concerned, they are treated as valid expressions of his devotion, perhaps slightly juxtaposed to his mission of bewildering the souls of the Kali-yuga¹³¹.

*bhaja govindam bhaja govindam
bhaja govindam mūḍha-mate
samprāpte sannihite kāle
na hi na hi rakṣati ḍukṛṇ-karaṇe*

Worship Govinda, worship Govinda, worship Govinda, O fool! When the appointed time for departure comes, the repetition of grammatical rules cannot possibly save you. (*Bhaja Govindam* of Śaṅkarācārya, refrain)¹³²

Amateur understanding of Hinduism sometimes relegates the practice of *bhakti* to those unfortunate souls who cannot learn the details of grammar at all. That relates

¹²⁹ Tackled in: Jacqueline Gaynor Suthren Hirst, "The Place of Bhakti in Śaṅkara's Vedānta", in: Karel Werner (Ed.), *Love Divine – Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism* (Durham 1993), pp. 117-145.

¹³⁰ For example, Adya Prasad Mishra, *The Development and Place of Bhakti in Śaṅkara Vedānta* (Allahabad, 1967), Robert Edwin Gussner, *Hymns of Praise: A Textual Critical Analysis of Selected Vedāntic Stotras Attributed to Śaṅkara with reference to the Question of Authenticity* (PhD thesis Harvard, 1973), and so on.

¹³¹ Expectedly, the *Vaiṣṇavas* are somewhat fascinated only with his stotras to Viṣṇu. Śaṅkara's apparent devotion to various deities is questionable from the strictly *Gauḍīya* point of view, but probably stems from his own views about *saguṇa-bhakti* as a mere means to attaining the *nirguṇa* state of perfection. The *Gauḍīyas* prefer to see him as the incarnation of Śiva, who in his essence is a *Vaiṣṇava*, as evidenced in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Canto Four, Chapter 24, *The Rudra-gītā*).

¹³² Quoted from: T. M. P. Mahadevan, *The Hymns of Śaṅkara* (Delhi, 1997), pp. 37-38. The *Bhaja Govindam stotra* seems to be one of those where Śaṅkara's original authorship is most easily defended.

to a slight misunderstanding about the teachings of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as well. In its Eleventh Canto, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives an overview of possible *sādhana*s and supplies the qualifications for the *sādhaka*s in each case.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
yogās trayo mayā proktā nṛṇāṃ śreyo-vidhīṣyā
jñānaṃ karma ca bhaktiś ca nopāyo 'nyo 'sti kutracit
nirviṇṇānāṃ jñāna-yogo nyāsināṃ iha karmasu
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānāṃ karma-yogas tu kāmīnāṃ
yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān
na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-daḥ

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said: My dear Uddhava, because I desire that human beings may achieve perfection, I have presented three paths of advancement – the path of knowledge, the path of work and the path of devotion. Besides these three there is absolutely no other means of elevation.

Among these three paths, *jñāna-yoga*, the path of philosophical speculation, is recommended for those who are disgusted with material life and are thus detached from ordinary, fruitive activities. Those who are not disgusted with material life, having many desires yet to fulfill, should seek perfection through the path of *karma-yoga*.

If somehow or other by good fortune one develops faith in hearing and chanting My glories, such a person, being neither very disgusted with nor attached to material life, should achieve perfection through the path of loving devotion to Me. (Bhāg. 11. 20. 6-8)

Devotion is here more than only a prop for those who do not fit into the other two options, rather, one is forced to resort to the two options described above if one does not yet possess supreme faith in the Lord, and faith in the potency of *bhakti* (*śraddhā*). Faith, according to the *Gauḍīya-siddhānta*, is the first step in *bhakti*, and it is here that spiritual life begins to unfold.

bahūnāṃ janmanāṃ ante jñānavān māṃ prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ

After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare. (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 7. 19)

The main difference then, between *bhakti* as understood in the *Gauḍīya* line (and other *Vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas*) and Śaṅkara is that while Śaṅkara values *bhakti* only as a means to the end, the *Vaiṣṇavas* see it as the means and the end at the same time. *Sādhana-bhakti* ultimately leads to *sādhya-bhakti*, *premā*.

❧ *Chapter Two* ❧

Bhakti-rasa –

Fusion of Theology and Aesthetics

2. 1. *Bhakti-rasa of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, we meet with a novel interpretation and use of the classical dramatical theory of *rasa*¹³³. *Rasa* combines with the concept of *bhakti* in a detailed aesthetic and theological system, designed to help the worshippers in their inner growth of devotional sentiment.

Outside Bengal and Vraja, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's contribution to aesthetics is relatively unknown, so much so that the famous compilation of Prof. K. C. Pandey, *Comparative Aesthetics*, does not mention his concepts at all¹³⁴. To this day, only a handful of native Indian and Western scholars have dealt with the subject of Rūpa Gosvāmī and his works¹³⁵.

2. 1. 1. *Components of the Bhakti-rasa Principle*

The *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* ontologically postulate the Supreme Lord as the source and shelter of all relationships and sentiments. The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* itself opens with a phrase, *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrtiḥ*, 'the reservoir of all pleasurable *rasas*' as an epithet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *Upaniṣads* hint at the pleasurable nature of the Supreme:

raso vai saḥ, rasam hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati

The Supreme Lord is Himself the *rasa*, the shelter of pleasurable sentiments. One who is able to establish a relationship with Him becomes transcendently blissful. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2. 7. 1)

¹³³ The word *rasa* is usually translated as sentiment, mellow, flavor, emotion, or feeling. The last two options, however, overlap with the translation of the word *bhāva*. Since *bhāva* and *rasa* need to be distinguished, most translators choose 'emotion' as a translation of *bhāva*, and 'sentiment' as a translation of *rasa*. The distinction is obviously more or less technical. Some translators of dramaturgical texts use 'dramatical sentiment' for *rasa*. But Rūpa Gosvāmī does not limit the sentiments to a dramatic performance – he uses the concept to describe the prototypes of possible relationships with the Supreme.

¹³⁴ It is mentioned, though, in P. V. Kane's *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, pp. 310-315.

¹³⁵ Native scholars include Prof. Sushil Kumar De of the University of Dacca, who edited Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Padyāvalī* and wrote the critical *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal*. Western scholars include David L. Haberman, who translated the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* into English, and wrote a work about the *Gauḍīya Rāgānuga-sādhana*. Native Indian research about Rūpa Gosvāmī was done by Ms. Premlata Sharma (*Studies in Bhakti-rasa according to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī*), and Raghu Nath Sharma (*Bhakti in the Vaiṣṇava Rasa-śāstra*). Two Western scholars who dealt with Rūpa Gosvāmī's works in their doctoral dissertations are Donna M. Wulff (*Drama as a Mode of Religious Realization: The Vidagdha-Mādhava of Rūpa Gosvāmī*), and Neal Delmonico (*Sacred Rapture: A Study of the Religious Aesthetic of Rūpa Gosvāmī*).

The infinitesimal *jīvas* distance themselves from Him due to envy and aversion, allowed to them by the concession of free will:

*kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha hañā bhoga-vāñchā kare
nikaṭa-stha māyā tāre jāpaṭiyā dhare*

A confused soul who desires his own enjoyment, and becomes averse to his loving relationship with the Supreme Lord, is immediately struck down by *māyā*, who keeps close guard of such rebellious souls. (*Prema-vivarta* of Jagadānanda Paṇḍita)

The practice of *bhakti*, then, is a way for the bewildered *jīvas* to train their minds, by habit prone to selfish enjoyment, in re-focusing full attention to the relationship with the Supreme Lord. *Rasa* in the theory of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* is not mere enjoyable sentiment, but a set of character frames to one of which the soul would eventually become attracted – as its intrinsic relationship with the Lord, covered since time immemorial, finally begins to unfold and blossom again. The Gosvāmīs chose to use the existing terminology of the *rasa* experience available in classical dramaturgical treatises, and many concepts within both theories are comparable to some degree. Let us make a short overview of the relevant passages.

Bhakti-rasa as conceived by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī externally consists of two distinct components:

- First, the *Nāṭya-śāstra* categories of the *rasa-sūtra* (*vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *vyabhicārīs* etc.), which will be presented here along with Rūpa Gosvāmī's slightly altered definitions for these terms.
- Second, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and other theological texts that support the idea of *bhakti* as a strong emotional bond between the *upāsaka* and *Bhagavān*.

The concept of *bhakti-rasa*, although traditionally a notion of perennial existence and not subject to debates about its perceived origin, could provisionally, for the sake of better comprehension, be seen as a synthesis of classical aesthetic principles and the theological principles of the *bhakti* movements which base their philosophy on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī explains:

*purāṇe nāṭya-śāstre ca dvayos tu rati-bhāvayoḥ
samānārthatayā hy atra dvayam aikyena lakṣitam*

In the *Purāṇas* and in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, *rati* and *bhāva* are equated. Here also these two terms are defined as synonyms. (BRS, 1. 3. 13)

After many examples from various *Purāṇas*, Rūpa Gosvāmī states that *rati* is fivefold, according to the particular tastes and inclinations of various devotees. This

fivefold division of *rati* (*śānta*, *prīti*, *preyān*, *vatsala* and *madhura*) will be fully discussed in the third, *paścima-vibhāga* of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

In the *pūrva-vibhāga*, Rūpa Gosvāmī first highlights the connection between the concepts of love towards God enunciated in the *Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas*, and the concepts of the *rasa* theory from the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. The ground is now prepared for the second, *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga*, in which the author takes up the consideration of each of the elements of the *rasa* theory, namely the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *sāttvikas*, *vyabhicārīs*, and the *sthāyi-bhāva*. Each of them is dealt with in a separate *laharī* of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga*.

<i>athāsyāḥ keśava-rater</i>	<i>lakṣitāyā nigadyate</i>
<i>sāmāgrī-paripoṣeṇa</i>	<i>paramā rasa-rūpatā</i>
<i>vibhāvair anubhāvaiś ca</i>	<i>sāttvikair vyabhicāribhiḥ</i>
<i>svādyatvaṁ hṛdi bhaktānām ānītā śravaṇādibhiḥ</i>	
<i>eṣā kṛṣṇa-ratiḥ sthāyī</i>	<i>bhāvo bhakti-raso bhavet</i>

Love (*rati*) for Keśava becomes the highest form of *rasa* when developed by means of a combination of the ingredients of the *rasa* experience. Love for Kṛṣṇa is the foundational emotion (*sthāyi-bhāva*) that becomes the *rasa* of devotion (*bhakti-rasa*) by means of the excitants (*vibhāvas*), indications (*anubhāvas*), responses (*sāttvikas*) and transitory emotions (*vyabhicāri-bhāvas*)¹³⁶ in the heart of devotees engaged in such actions as hearing the scriptures (*śravaṇa*). (BRS, 2. 1. 4-5)

The general definition of the components of the experience of *bhakti-rasa* is as follows:

<i>ye kṛṣṇa-bhakta-murali-</i>	<i>nādādyā hetavo rateḥ</i>
<i>kārya-bhūtāḥ smitādyas ca</i>	<i>tathāṣṭau stabdhatādayaḥ</i>
<i>nirvedādyāḥ sahāyās ca</i>	<i>te jñeyā rasa-bhāvane</i>
<i>vibhāvā anubhāvās ca</i>	<i>sāttvikā vyabhicāriṇaḥ</i>

The causes of love, such as Kṛṣṇa, His devotees, and the sound of His flute; the resulting expressions such as smiling; the eight reactions such as stupefaction; and the assisting emotions, such as indifference, are known in the experience of *rasa* to be respectively the *vibhāvas* (excitants), the *anubhāvas* (indications), the *sāttvikas* (responses) and the *vyabhicārīs* (transitory emotions). (BRS, 2. 1. 12-13)

This enumeration of the ingredients of aesthetic experience mirrors the ones found in classical theoretical works on aesthetics. The ultimate reference for the ancient Indian aesthetic theory is the *Nāṭya-śāstra* of the venerable sage Bharata.

¹³⁶ The translations of the ingredients of the *rasa* experience are taken mostly from Haberman. Other options exist, presented in a table in Appendix 2.

2. 2. Aesthetic Theory of the Nāṭya-śāstra

2. 2. 1. The Traditional Worldview of a Vaiṣṇava

To be able to appreciate how the Vaiṣṇava theologians came to use the classical works on dramaturgy and aesthetics – the Nāṭya-śāstra and the abridged compendiums that followed in its wake – we have to briefly touch upon the traditional Vaiṣṇava understanding of the sacred cosmogony and hierarchical cosmology, of both the visible world and the so-called mythological worlds beyond the visible sphere.

Traditionally, the Vaiṣṇavas do not subscribe to the idea of the supremacy of the impersonal Supreme, in Sanskrit sources described as the Brahman. Vaiṣṇava scriptures consider the *brahma-jyoti* (the light of Brahman) as the mere effulgence of the Supreme Person, to whom they endeavor to return by re-developing their own spiritual selves to the extent where they can enter the ever-pure Kingdom of God. A quote from the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, a collection of inspired prayers by Brahmā, sheds light on the point:

*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi-
koṭīṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnaṁ
tad brahma niṣkalam anantaṁ aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose effulgence is the source of the impersonal Brahman mentioned in the *Upaniṣads*. Being differentiated from the infinity of glories of the mundane universe, it appears as the indivisible, infinite, limitless, truth. (BS, 5. 40)

Traditionally, the spiritual world represents the greater majority of the whole creation, the mundane world being only its insignificant corner¹³⁷. Within that corner of covered spiritual opulence, there is a gradation of abodes with ascending purity, and intimacy in the exchanges with the Supreme Person.

*goloka-nāmni nija-dhāmni tale ca tasya
devi-maheṣa-hari-dhāmasu teṣu teṣu
te te prabhāva-nicayā vihitāś ca yena
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

¹³⁷ The Ṛg Veda, in its famous *Puruṣa-sūkta*, speaks of the one-quarter to three-quarters division: *etāvān asya mahimā ato jyāyāṁś ca puruṣaḥ / pādo 'sya viśvā bhūtāni tripādasyāṁṛtaṁ divi*, "Such is His greatness, and He is even greater than this. All beings in the mundane creation are His one fourth, while three fourths of the creation, which is immortal, are above the mundane sphere." (*Puruṣa-sūkta*, *Ṛk-saṁhitā* 10. 90. 3)

Lowest of all is located *Devī-dhāma* [mundane world], next above it is *Maheśa-dhāma* [abode of Maheśa]; above *Maheśa-dhāma* is placed *Hari-dhāma* [abode of Hari, *Vaikuṇṭha*] and above them all is located Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own realm named *Goloka-dhāma*. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, who has allotted their respective authorities to the rulers of those graded realms. (BS, 5. 43)

Many of the *sāttvika Purāṇas* (*Bhāgavata*, *Padma*, *Viṣṇu*, etc.) describe these amazing spiritual spheres inhabited by perfected devotees. *Vaikuṇṭha*, the abode of Viṣṇu, is the point of perfection for all devotees who feel an inclination to eternally relate to the Lord with awe and respect, in the full consciousness of His overlordship and grandeur (*aiśvarya*). Such a mood of veneration is most characteristic of the *Śrī-Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya*.

A wonderful verse in the *Ṛk-saṁhitā* (1. 22. 20), known for being used at the beginning and at the end of various Vedic sacrifices, gives us the clear hierarchy and a glimpse of higher realities:

*om tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam
sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ divīva cakṣur ātataṁ
tad viprāso vipanyavo jāgrvāmsaḥ samindhate
viṣṇor yat paramaṁ padam*

That supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu (*Vaikuṇṭha*) is the objective of the devotees who can always perceive it with their divine vision. That abode can be revealed to others by the learned, praiseworthy *brāhmaṇas* who are spiritually awake.

Since the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* is inclined towards the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the intimacy that surpasses the mood of *Vaikuṇṭha-dhāma*, we will here focus on the descriptions of *Goloka-dhāma*¹³⁸. A few verses from the *Brahma-saṁhitā* will be an introduction to that paradise of devotion:

*śriyaḥ kāntāḥ kāntaḥ parama-puruṣaḥ kalpa-taravo
drumā bhūmiś cintāmaṇi-gaṇa-mayī toyam amṛtam
kathā gānaṁ nāṭyaṁ gamanam api vaṁśī priya-sakhī
cid-ānandaṁ jyotiḥ param api tad āsvādyam api ca
sa yatra kṣīrābdhiḥ sravati surabhībhyaś ca su-mahān
nimeṣārdhākhyo vā vrajati na hi yatrāpi samayaḥ
bhaje śvetadvīpaṁ tam aham iha golokam iti yaṁ
vidantas te santaḥ kṣiti-vīrala-cārāḥ katipaye*

¹³⁸ Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states (BRS. 1. 2. 59): *siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi śrīṣa-kṛṣṇa-svarūpayoḥ / rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-rūpaṁ eṣā rasa-sthitiḥ*. "Although in reality there is no difference between Lord Nārāyaṇa and Lord Kṛṣṇa, there is a special attraction in Lord Kṛṣṇa due to the higher mellows of devotion possible in relation to Him." In the same vein, Jīva Gosvāmī treats the verse of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 1. 3. 28 as the main text of the whole *Bhāgavata*: *ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*, "All of the mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead."

I worship that transcendental seat, known as Śvetadvīpa where as loving consorts the Lakṣmīs in their unalloyed spiritual essence render loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa as the only object of their affection; where every tree is a transcendental purpose tree; where the soil is the purpose gem, all water is nectar, every word is a song, every step is a dance, the flute is the favorite attendant, effulgence is full of transcendental bliss and the supreme spiritual entities are all enjoyable and tasty, where numberless milk cows always emit transcendental oceans of milk; where there is eternal existence of transcendental time, who is ever present and without past or future and hence is not subject to the quality of passing away even for the space of half a moment. That realm is known as Goloka only to a very few self-realized souls in this world. (BS, 5. 56-7)

In the eyes of a devotee, the supremacy of Goloka and the superexcellent devotional sentiments of its pure inhabitants are the guiding light in appreciating all other elements of creation. We are here trying to relate to the classical treatises of dramaturgy, making them fit into the *Vaiṣṇava* worldview by finding the ultimate source of these arts in Goloka-dhāma. Here again, the *Brahma-saṁhitā* is the key:

*ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhis
tābhir ya eva nija-rūpatayā kalābhiḥ
goloka eva nivasaty akhilātma-bhūto
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, residing in His own realm, Goloka, with Rādhā, resembling His own spiritual figure, the embodiment of the ecstatic potency possessed of the sixty-four artistic activities (*kalās*), in the company of Her confidantes (the *sakhīs*), embodiments of the extensions of Her bodily form, permeated and vitalized by His ever-blissful spiritual *rasa*. (BS, 5. 37)

Goloka-dhāma, the highest spiritual realm, is the seat of all the arts in their fully spiritual original state, used by the devotionally inspired residents of that abode in service to Rādhā-Govinda. Among the traditional sixty-four arts, the prominent four are singing (*gīta*), music (*vādyā*), dancing (*nṛtya*) and drama (*nāṭya*). All these arts have descended to the mundane world as well, though they have lost much of their purity and transcendent focus in the process¹³⁹. The *Nāṭya-śāstra* itself speaks of its origin in its first and last (36.) chapter.

¹³⁹ It is interesting to note in this regard that in traditional India at least, until recently most of the forms of art (architecture, painting, sculpture, dance, music, singing) had a predominantly religious and not mere lartpourlartistic purpose.

2. 2. 2. The Descent of the Nāṭya-śāstra

In every *Tretā-yuga*, when the consciousness of the people deteriorates from the pure *paramahansa* level, the four *varṇas* appear, and the *sūdras* become incompetent to hear the *Vedas*. The demigods at that time approach Lord Brahmā with a request: "Please create an entertaining art which will also serve as a mode of instruction to the people of all the *varṇas*."¹⁴⁰ Brahmā then creates the *Nāṭya-veda*, the fifth Veda of the science of drama, out of the four *Vedas*¹⁴¹, and makes it descend from higher realms of the creation. The art of drama is handed over to Bharata Muni and his one hundred sons for preservation and dissemination. They learn it thoroughly and, on the auspicious occasion of the festival of lifting the victory flag of Indra, the first drama in the mundane world is staged in the heavenly court.

Later on, due to arrogance of expertise in drama, the sons of Bharata offend a group of respectable sages with their inappropriate comedies. The sages curse them that they will soon lose their brahminical status and fall down to earth. After killing *Vṛtrāsura*, Indra has to give up his post and is trying to nullify the sin he has incurred¹⁴². At that time, Indra's throne is occupied by *Nahuṣa*, an earthly king.

Nahuṣa sees the art of drama practiced in the heavens and desires to take it down to the earth as well. In obedience to the curse of the sages, the sons of Bharata accompany king *Nahuṣa* back down to earth and stay there, teaching the art of drama to the mortals. They marry earthly ladies and mingle with the residents of the earth, and thus the high status of the actors as a class is somewhat reduced.

But that is of course different in pure devotional drama, which has the fifth, highest *puṛuṣārtha* as its goal, and not the three ordinary *puṛuṣārthas* like *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*¹⁴³. Pure devotional drama is, in its appearance and its result, like those staged in *Goloka-dhāma* for the sole pleasure of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is known to have directed dramas together with His close associates. The *ācāryas* of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* have written a few exceptional dramas filled with *bhakti* to the brim: the most famous are the *Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka* of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, the three dramas of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and the *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka* of Kavi Karpūra. These dramas will be studied in the second part of the thesis.

¹⁴⁰ *krīḍanīyakam icchāmo dṛśyam śravyaṁ ca yad bhavet // na veda-vyavahāro 'yaṁ saṁśrāvyaḥ sūdra-jātiṣu / tasmād sṛjāparam vedaṁ pañcamam sārva-varṇikam* (NS, 1. 11-12)

¹⁴¹ *jagrāha pāṭhyam ṛg-vedāt sāmabhyo gītā eva ca / yajur-vedāt abhinayān rasān ātharvaṇād api*, "Lord Brahmā (in creating the art of drama) took recitation from the *Ṛg Veda*, music from the *Sāma Veda*, artistic gestures from the *Yajur Veda*, and the aesthetic emotions from the *Atharva Veda*." (NS, 1. 17)

¹⁴² The theme of Indra killing *Vṛtrāsura* is often mentioned passingly in the Vedic hymns to Indra, while the whole story is related in many *Purāṇas* (in the *Bhāgavata*, Canto 6, chapters 9-13).

¹⁴³ The philosophy of Śrī Caitanya is that the most important goal in human life is *premā*, pure love towards the Lord (a saying attributed to him is: *premā pum-artha mahān*).

2. 3. The Formula of the Rasa Experience

The practice of drama, along with music and dance, is described by Bharata Muni in his *Nāṭya-śāstra*. As a helping hand to actors, it supplies them elaborate descriptions of emotions, and a detailed theory of their expression, known as the theory of *rasa*. Let us inspect the theory of Bharata Muni, to be able to clearly see the corresponding features in Rūpa Gosvāmī's system of *bhakti-rasa*.

We must know, however, that we are dealing with the science of *rasa* as it has descended into the mundane sphere, and is not necessarily focused on the Lord. The emotions studied in this theory are therefore deprived of much of their potential purity and intensity. Nevertheless, the key ingredients of emotional experience as analyzed by Bharata are still valid, and may help us understand our emotions on the mundane level, as well as help us develop our pure emotions towards the Lord.¹⁴⁴ The experience of *rasa*, Bharata Muni says, is possible only when the following ingredients combine:

- *vibhāvas* (excitants) – persons and conditions that excite the emotion
- *anubhāvas* (indications) – changes in body and mind as a result of experiencing the emotion¹⁴⁵
- *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* (transitory emotions) – minor emotions accompanying and enhancing the main one
- *sthāyi-bhāva* (permanent emotion) – the latent main emotion present in the mind.

The full formula of the experience of *rasa* is the famous so-called *rasa-sūtra*, from the sixth chapter of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. Bharata Muni puts it this way:

vibhāva-anubhāva-vyabhicāri-saṁyogād rasa-niṣpattiḥ

Rasa appears when the *sthāyi-bhāva* is augmented with the appropriate *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and the *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*.¹⁴⁶

This simple formula holds true for any of the traditional eight emotions described in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. Another one is usually added, the *śānta-rasa*, a black sheep among them because of its pointing towards transcendence. In the ordinary theory

¹⁴⁴ Many of the traditional theorists deny the existence of *rasas* outside the theatre and poetic works. Rūpa Gosvāmī's system, however, is not concerned with mere aesthetic enjoyment but transfers the ingredients of the dramatic experience into a transcendent relationship of the soul with the Supreme Soul, the original reservoir of all *rasas*.

¹⁴⁵ The *sāttvikas* (involuntary emotional responses) are usually included under the *anubhāvas*, as a special, deeper variety of them.

¹⁴⁶ *Nāṭya-śāstra*, 6.38.

of Sanskrit drama, the way it was preserved in the beginning of the Kali-yuga, the traditional eight emotions were severed from their connection with the Supreme Soul. To make up for the absence of transcendence, the *śānta-rasa* was added to the list by some of the commentators to the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, indicating the need that began to be felt of distancing oneself from the troublesome and one-sided attachments towards matter, and developing a sense of renunciation towards the mundane world.

But for *bhakti-yogīs*, even such pure renunciation of the world and aspiration after the peace of Brahman realization is not enough, and the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* lead us beyond mere spiritual peace into a whole new world of purified, transcendental feelings directed to the Lord. This is the contribution of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī to the field of Indian Aesthetics. Emotions tied to mundane objects are repressed in lower stages of spiritual practice and considered a threat to the aspiring seeker of perfection. At the point of tangible, mature spiritual advancement, however, they are awakened in their true spiritual capacity, spiritualized through a spiritual object, and become a guiding light toward newer and newer heights in relationship with the Supreme Lord.

2. 4. Definitions in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*

At the beginning of the sixth chapter of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, the assembled sages inquire from their teacher, Bharata Muni, about the sentiments employed in dramas:

ye rasā iti paṭhyante nāṭye nāṭya-vicakṣaṇaiḥ
rasatvaṁ kena vai teṣāṁ etad ākhyātum arhasi
bhāvānś caiva katham proktāḥ kim vā te bhāvayanty api (...)

The experts in dramaturgy speak of sentiments. What are they? How did they become sentiments? What is meant by emotions? How are they expressed? (...) (NŚ, 6. 2, 3)

In his answer to the sages, Bharata compares the knowledge of arts to an ocean, saying that he will supply concise definitions with limited words, which can be expanded further by means of inference and imagination.

Bharata Muni deals with the topic of *rasa* and *bhāva* in the sixth and seventh chapter of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. The later commentarial tradition wrestled with the connection between the two: *rasa* and *bhāva* are apparently the same thing, but while *bhāva* is only the 'raw' emotional material latent in the heart, the *rasa* is its fully developed perfected stage, brought about by a combination of all the ingredients of the *rasa* experience. The apparent difference is maintained in Sanskrit with two similar sets of terms for the corresponding *bhāvas* and *rasas*,

although trying to preserve the difference in the translations has proven to be a difficult task. N. P. Unni in his translation¹⁴⁷ gives it a try:

*śṛṅgāra-hāsyā-karuṇā raudra-vīra-bhayānakāḥ
bībhatsādbhuta-saṁjñau cety aṣṭau nāṭye rasāḥ smṛtāḥ*

In dance and drama there are eight sentiments, *śṛṅgāra* (the Loving)¹⁴⁸, *hāsyā* (the Comic), *karuṇā* (the Pathetic), *raudra* (the Furious), *vīra* (the Heroic), *bhayānaka* (the Terrible), *bībhatsa* (the Disgusting), and *adbhuta* (the Marvellous).

*ratir hāsaś ca śokaś ca krodhotsāhau bhayaṁ tathā
jugupsā vismayaś ceti sthāyi-bhāvāḥ prakīrtitāḥ*

The eight *sthāyi-bhāvas* or permanent moods corresponding to the eight sentiments are given categorically as: *rati* (Love), *hāsa* (Mirth), *śoka* (Sorrow), *krodha* (Anger), *utsāha* (Courage), *bhaya* (Fear), *jugupsā* (Aversion) and *vismaya* (Wonder). (NŚ, 6. 16, 18)

Traditionally, the term *bhāva* includes the eight *sthāyi-bhāvas*, thirty-three *sañcāri-bhāvas* (or *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*) and the eight *sattvaja-bhāvas*. The traditional number of *bhāvas* is therefore forty-nine. The *vibhāvas* and the *anubhāvas* are not included in the calculation because they are not so easily definable, much less counted. After the enumeration of *rasas* and their corresponding *sthāyi-bhāvas*, Bharata Muni lists all of the *vyabhicārīs* and the eight *sāttvikas*, and other elements of the art of drama like the four kinds of *abhinayas* (representations) – *āṅgika* (bodily), *vācika* (vocal), *āhārya* (external like dress) and *sāttvika* (involuntary expression of internal feelings). As the *rasas* (sentiments) are the most important, he offers to study them first.

*tatra rasān eva tāvad ādāv abhivyākhyāsyāmaḥ
na hi rasād ṛte kaścid arthaḥ pravartate
tatra vibhavānubhāva-vyabhicāri-saṁyogād rasa-niṣpattiḥ*

Among the elements of the art of drama, I shall deal with the sentiments at the outset. There would be no meaning [in the art of drama] without sentiments. The conjunction of *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* causes the appearance of *rasas* (sentiments). (NŚ, 6. 34)

Bharata compares the appearance of *rasa* to the act of cooking: the various ingredients like vegetables, herbs, spices and so on, are the raw material, and the final product is a cooked dish, relishable and complete, although so many ingredients

¹⁴⁷ Dr. N. P. Unni, *Nāṭya-śāstra – Text with Introduction, English Translation and Indices* (Delhi, 2003).

¹⁴⁸ I avoid the term erotic as a translation of *śṛṅgāra*, since that would clash with the sober mood of the religious writings of the *Gauḍīya ācāryas*.

are present in it. The sages have asked him, “What is a *rasa*?” and he replies, “*Rasa* is something that can be relished.” “And how does one relish a sentiment, a *rasa*?” “Just like the noble people taste the sumptuous food and different tastes within it, so do the noble-minded spectators relish the various sentiments in a dramatic representation.” Bharata poses another question to himself: “Do the sentiments (*rasas*) give rise to emotions (*bhāvas*) or is it the other way around?” He answers, “Some hold that both are the cause and effect because of their close relations. But it is not so. Why? Because we notice that the emotions culminate in the sentiments and not the other way.” He quotes supportive *ślokas*:

nānābhīnaya-sambaddhān bhāvayanti rasān imān
yasmāt tasmād amī bhāvā vijñeyā nāṭya-yokṛbhiḥ
na bhāva-hīno ‘sti raso na bhāvo rasa-varjitaḥ
paraspara-kṛtā siddhis tayor abhinayo bhavet

The authorities on drama call the emotional fervor *bhāvas*, because they help in realizing (*bhāvayanti*) the *rasas* connected with the various forms of representation. There can be no *rasa* without the accompaniment of *bhāva*, nor is there any *bhāva* which is devoid of *rasa*. Their mutual help makes the representation perfect. (NŚ, 6. 40, 42)

Bharata then enumerates all the eight *rasas* with their corresponding *sthāyīs*, characteristic *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and possible accompanying *vyabhicārīs*, and thus concludes the chapter on sentiments. In the next, seventh chapter, devoted to *bhāvas*, he again opens the discussion on the meaning of *bhāva*, and derives its meaning from the causative form of the verb *bhū-* (*bhāvayati*), with meanings like “manifest, make to appear, facilitate the appearance, pervade, make distinct”. He glosses the word *vibhāva* (the excitant, an external stir to activate an emotion) as equal to terms *nimitta*, *hetu* and *kāraṇa*, which broadly refer to a cause. *Anubhāva* (the indication, an external effect of the emotion) is explained through its etymological base, the verb *anu-bhū-* which either means to experience, or to follow.

yo ‘rtho hṛdaya-saṁvādī tasya bhāvo rasodbhavaḥ
śarīraṁ vyāpyate tena śuṣkaṁ kāṣṭham ivāgninā

That meaning which is endearing to the heart gives rise to emotions resulting in the experience of a *rasa*. That experience pervades the whole body as fire engulfs the dry wood. (NŚ, 7. 13)

A question may be asked, Bharata presupposes, “Why is the *sthāyī-bhāva* not included in the *rasa-sūtra*?” His answer is that *sthāyī* is the foundation of the *rasa* experience, and from it directly the *rasa* develops, while the other ingredients are only subsidiary.

yathā narāṇām nṛpatiḥ śiṣyānām ca yathā guruḥ
evaṁ hi sarva-bhāvānām bhāvaḥ sthāyī mahān iha

Like king among men and teacher among students, the *sthāyī* is always superior among the different kinds of *bhāvas*. (NŚ, 7. 15)

Bharata then proceeds to describe all the thirty-three *vyabhicārīs*, with the appropriate *vibhāvas* and *anubhāvas*, and then opens a discussion on the *sāttvikas*. An incredulous questioner may ask, "If the word *sāttvika* means 'the involuntary manifestation of a deep affection of one's being', then are the other *anubhāvas* represented without a deep affection?" "Yes, exactly," Bharata answers, "unlike the ordinary *anubhāvas* which are easily imitated, the *sāttvikas* call for a deeper mental engagement to the point where the affected state seems real to the spectator." He lists them,

stambhaḥ svedo 'tha romāñcaḥ svara-bhedo 'tha vepathuḥ
vaivarnyam aśru-pralaya ity aṣṭau sāttvikā matāḥ

The eight involuntary exhibitions of internal state are as follows: stupor, perspiration, horripilation, broken voice, trembling, change of color, tears and loss of consciousness. (NŚ, 7. 147)

At the end of chapter seven, Bharata discusses the various possible combinations of *sthāyīs* with the different *sāttvikas* and *vyabhicārīs*. He concludes with an observation,

na hy eka-rasa-jam kāvyam naika-bhāvaika-vṛttikam
vimarḍe raṅgam āyāti prayuktaṁ hi prayatnataḥ
nānā-bhāvārtha-sampannāḥ sthāyī-sattva-vicāriṇaḥ
puṣpa-vikīrṇāḥ kartavyāḥ kāvyeṣu hi rasā budhaiḥ

There is no poem dealing with a single sentiment or delineating a single *bhāva* or a *vṛtti* (style). All of them combine to produce the desired dramatic appeal. Care should be taken that the various *sthāyīs*, *sāttvikas* and *vyabhicārīs* enhanced by various other emotions should be arranged in such a way that they appear as flowers strewn all over, raised to the delectable position of sentiments. (NŚ, 7. 178-9)

This much should suffice as an introduction to the concepts of *rasa* in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was a writer of dramas as well, but primarily, his concept of *bhakti-rasa* does not relate very closely to the *rasa* of the dramatic performance. The difference will become apparent as we peruse the details of his novel application of the theory of *rasa*.

2. 5. Definitions in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

We can try to identify the sources lying in front of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī at the time of his writing the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. The writings that he based his concepts on can be grouped into the following categories:

- theories on *bhakti-rasa* written before him, *Nāma-kaumudī* and *Muktā-phala*,
- the *Purāṇic* literature on *bhakti*: the *Bhāgavata* and other *Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas*, the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, and works of other *bhakti* poets collected in his *Padyāvalī*,
- the traditional works that include chapters on poetry, drama and aesthetics: the *Agni Purāṇa* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*,
- the *Nāṭya-śāstra* and its commentarial tradition,
- the traditional poetic, aesthetic and dramatic theories.

But to reduce Rūpa Gosvāmī's writing to simply a mechanical assessment of the available works and merely an intellectual 'packaging' of the ideas of Śrī Caitanya on *bhakti-rasa* would seem somewhat external and overly simplified in the circle of even ordinary devotees, what to speak of those of the caliber of Rūpa, Sanātana and Jīva Gosvāmīs. For a saint so empowered and so much in line with the thoughts and desires of his master, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, his writing was undoubtedly of a very special kind. If the Supreme Lord ever felt obliged to guide a saint in writing, it was right here, in the case of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. Like the perfected *yogīs* and much more than that, such a person of supremely advanced devotion has the Lord's potencies under his control without even desiring, and often without even noticing it. The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* was written in such a state of supreme attention to the dictation of the Supreme Lord, and with His full blessings. It is an intricate guide for the devotees in finetuning their emotional responses to the Lord, through hearing about Him and other forms of *bhakti*. And yet, while certainly trying to lead the readers towards high emotional relish within their relationship to the Supreme Lord, Rūpa Gosvāmī is careful to show the superiority of devotees who are able to overcome the fascination with their own ecstasies.

*aṅga-stambhārambham uttuṅgayantam premānandam dāruko nābhyanandat
kaṁsārāter vījane yena sākṣād akṣodiyān antarāyo vyadhāyi*

Śrī Dāruka did not relish his ecstatic feelings of love, for they caused his limbs to become stunned and thus obstructed his service of fanning Lord Kṛṣṇa. (BRS, 3. 2. 62).

2. 5. 1. The Vibhāvas (Excitants)

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī begins the first *laharī* of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* with a general definition of the *vibhāvas*, or excitants of spiritual emotions.

tatra jñeyā vibhāvās tu ratyāsvādana-hetavaḥ
te dvidhāmbanā eke tathavoddīpane pare

The excitants are considered to be the causes of experiencing love. They are of two kinds: the first are the substantial excitants (*āmbana-vibhāvas*) and the second are the enhancing excitants (*uddīpana-vibhāvas*). (BRS, 2. 1. 14)

This twofold division of *vibhāvas* follows the *Agni Purāṇa* (338. 36), and Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes it:

vibhāvvyate hi ratyādir yatra yena vibhāvvyate
vibhāvo nāma sa dvedhāmbanoddīpanātmakaḥ

That by which and wherein love and the other foundational emotions are aroused is called the excitant. It is of two kinds: the substantial excitant and the enhancing excitant. (Quoted in BRS, 2. 1. 15)

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, however, which is not a treatise of dramatic theory but a theological inspiration for devotional mysticism, the *āmbana-vibhāva* is declared to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Kṛṣṇa is the object (*viṣaya*) of *rati* and the devotees are the vessels (*ādhāra* or *āśraya*) of *rati* toward Kṛṣṇa. The *uddīpana-vibhāvas* are divided into thirteen kinds: Kṛṣṇa's qualities, actions, ornaments, smile, decorations, footprints, the Tulasī plant, festivals celebrated in Kṛṣṇa's glory etc.

Its number of verses being almost four hundred, this is perhaps one of the most extensive *laharīs* in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Its major portion is a delineation of the qualities, features, forms and virtues of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *aprākṛta-nāyaka*, and the subject will be covered in Chapter 2 of the second part of the thesis.

2. 5. 2. The Anubhāvas (Indications)

The second *laharī* of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* defines the *anubhāvas*:

anubhāvās tu citta-stha- bhāvānām avabodhakāḥ
te bahir vikriyā prāyāḥ proktā udbhāsvarākhyayā

The indications are the external reactions that indicate the emotions situated in the heart. They are also known as the illuminators (*udbhāsvaras*). (BRS. 2. 2. 1)

There is a twofold division of them, they may be *śīta* (cool) or *kṣepaṇa* (ecstatic). Here again, Rūpa Gosvāmī does not present a full palette of possible mundane emotional responses to be used in dramatic performances, but deals exclusively with ecstatic outbursts which occur in one's mature relationship with the Supreme Lord. Thirteen kinds of *anubhāvas* are enumerated, beginning with dancing, along with illustrations.¹⁴⁹ An example of 'rolling on the ground' is a verse from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* which describes Akrūra, the uncle of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as having lost his composure upon his arrival in Vṛndāvana. He fell off the chariot onto the road, upon seeing the marks of Kṛṣṇa's foot soles in the fine sand. (BRS, 2. 2. 5)

2. 5. 3. The *Sāttvikas* (Involuntary Responses)

The next, third *laharī* of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* describes the *sāttvikas*:

*kṛṣṇa-sambandhibhiḥ sākṣāt kiñcid vā vyavadhānataḥ
bhāvaiś cittam ihākrāntaṁ sattvam ity ucyate budhaiḥ
sattvād asmāt samutpannā ye bhāvās te tu sāttvikāḥ
snigdha digdhā tathā rukṣā ity amī trividhā matāḥ*

The wise call the mind pure and luminous (*sattva*) when it is imbued with *bhāvas* associated with either direct or obscure relationship with Kṛṣṇa. The emotional states arising from this pure and luminous state of mind are called *sāttvikas*. They are of three types, *snigdha* (affectionate), *digdhā* (tainted) and *rukṣa* (harsh). (BRS, 2. 3. 1-2)

In his commentary to this definition of the *sāttvikas*, Jīva Gosvāmī helps to distinguish them from the previously mentioned *anubhāvas*. He states, "In this definition, transformations arising solely from *sattva* are to be understood. That is because the *anubhāvas* such as dancing also arise from *sattva* (heart overwhelmed by *rati*), but in combination with the intelligence. The *sāttvikas* such as becoming stunned, however, arise from *sattva* alone, with no help of the intelligence." Rūpa Gosvāmī enumerates the standard eight *sāttvikas*, the same as the ones mentioned in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, along with examples. He offers the reader a string of wonderful emotional miniatures in writing, either a production of his own poetic genius, or quotes from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. His own:

¹⁴⁹ The list includes: dancing, rolling on the ground, singing, shouting, stretching the body, bellowing, yawning, deep breaths, disregard of one's environment, drooling, loud laughter, whirling around and hiccups. (BRS, 2. 2. 2)

*kundair mukundāya mudā sṛjantī srajāṁ varāṁ kunda-vidāmbi-dantī
babhūva gāndharva-rasena-veṇor gāndharvikā spandana-śūnya-gātrī*

Rādhikā, whose teeth are more splendid than the jasmine flower, was making an excellent garland of jasmine flowers for Mukunda. She then heard the sweet song of the flute and became motionless. (BRS, 2. 3. 5)

From the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (3. 2. 14):

*yasyānurāga-pluta-hāsa-rāsa- līlāvaloka-pratilabdhamānāḥ
vraja-striyo dṛgbhīr anupravṛtta- dhiyo 'vatasthūḥ kila kṛtya-śeṣāḥ*

The damsels of Vraja, after pastimes of laughter, humor and exchanges of glances, used to follow Him with their eyes, and thus they sat down with stunned intelligence and could not complete their household duties. (Quoted in BRS, 2. 3. 22)

The three varieties of *sāttvikas* in Rūpa Gosvāmī's system are determined according to the closeness of the emotion to the Supreme. The *snigdha* (affectionate) variety appears in persons who are individually affected in the relationship with the Lord. The *digdha* (tainted) variety also appears in the close associates of the Lord, but is activated by a *bhāva* different from their foundational *rati* in relation to the Lord. The third kind, the *rukṣa* (harsh), is triggered by only a *raty-ābhāsa*, a shadow of *rati*, in persons who may have a mundane disposition but happen to hear heart-melting songs about the Lord, and are positively affected for a moment.

2. 5. 4. The Vyabhicārīs (Transitory Emotions)

The fourth *laharī* deals with the *vyabhicārī-bhāvas*:

*athocyante trayas triṁśad bhāvā ye vyabhicārīṇaḥ
viśeṣeṇābhīmukhyena caranti sthāyinaṁ prati
vāg-aṅga-sattva-sūcyā ye jñeyās te vyabhicārīṇaḥ
sañcārayanti bhāvasya gatiṁ sañcārīṇo 'pi te
unmajjanti nimajjanti sthāyiny amṛta-vāridhau
ūrmi-vad vardhayanty enaṁ yānti tad-rūpatāṁ ca te*

Thirty three emotional states are called transitory emotions (*vyabhicārī-bhāvas*) because they accompany the foundational emotion (*sthāyī*) providing it with special enhancement. The transitory emotions are indicated through the voice, body and mental states, and are also known as variable emotions (*sañcārīs*) since they cause the *sthāyī* to vary. Rising and falling like waves in the sweet ocean of the *sthāyī-bhāva*, they nourish it and then merge back into it. (BRS, 2. 4. 1-3)

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī proceeds to enumerate them, along with possible causes and suitable poetic examples. The traditional list is as follows: *nirveda* (self-disparagement), *viṣāda* (remorse), *dainya* (depression), *glāni* (debility), *śrama* (weariness), *mada* (intoxication), *garva* (haughtiness), *śaṅkā* (apprehension), *trāsa* (fright), *āvega* (confusion), *unmāda* (insanity), *apasmṛti* (dementedness), *vyādhi* (sickness), *moha* (loss of awareness), *mṛti* (death-like symptoms), *ālasya* (laziness), *jāḍya* (indecision), *vṛīḍā* (shame), *avahitthā* (concealment), *smṛti* (remembrance), *vitarka* (conjecture), *cintā* (pondering), *mati* (resolve), *dhṛti* (steadiness), *harṣa* (joy), *autsukya* (impatience), *augrya* (ferocity), *amarṣa* (indignation), *asūyā* (fault-finding), *cāpalya* (unsteadiness), *nidrā* (sleepiness), *supti* (dreaming) and *bodha* (awakening).

In addition to these, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes thirteen more emotional states, but seeks to include them in the existing thirty-three¹⁵⁰: *mātsarya* (envy), *udvega* (flurry), *dambha* (pride), *īrṣyā* (jealousy), *viveka* (discrimination), *nirṇaya* (coming to conclusion), *klaibya* (weakness), *kṣamā* (forgiveness), *kutuka* (curiosity), *utkaṇṭhā* (longing), *vinaya* (modesty), *saṁśaya* (doubt), *dhārṣṭya* (audacity). *Mātsarya* is treated as a sub-variety of *asūyā*, *udvega* is included in the *trāsa*, and so on.

Throughout the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī shows a high level of compliance with the rudimentary theory of *rasa* of the sage Bharata, going as far as listing *nirveda* first among the *vyābhicārīs*, because Bharata has done so. Jīva Gosvāmī comments that this is merely out of deference to the authority of Bharata¹⁵¹. They both acknowledge the position of some dramatic theorists who consider *nirveda* to be the *sthāyī* of *śānta-rasa*. The matter is complicated, due to *nirveda* being traditionally a *vyābhicārī*, and not a *sthāyī*. Of course, in his own system, Rūpa Gosvāmī posits *śānta-rati* as the *sthāyī* of *śānta-rasa*, and avoids such pitfalls.

This entire *laharī* offers a wonderful opportunity to Rūpa Gosvāmī for selecting and composing suitable examples of the various *vyābhicārīs* in relation to each other, and to other aesthetic elements. He sets up an impressive categorization of different types of *vyābhicārīs* as well as their shadowy forms, discusses their causes and effects, their stages and the degrees of mental perceptiveness which affect the manifestation of the *vyābhicārīs*.

As an example of *nirveda* arising out of separation from the beloved person, Rūpa Gosvāmī describes the state of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's friend Subala, put into his own mouth:

¹⁵⁰ In doing so, he seems to be collecting various additions to the list: from the *Viṣṇudharmottara* (31.39) the *saṁśaya*, from the *Nāṭya-darpaṇa* of Guṇacandra and Rāmacandra (3. 177) the *kṣamā*, from the *Bhāva-prakāśa* of Śāradātanaya (Ch. 2) the *mātsarya*, and from the *Rasārṇava-sudhākara* of Simha Bhūpāla (2. 14) the *udvega*, *dambha* and *īrṣyā*.

¹⁵¹ BRS, 2. 4. 13: *amaṅgalam api procya nirvedam prathamam muniḥ / mene 'muni sthāyinaṁ śānta iti jalpanti kecana*, "Although it is inauspicious, Bharata Muni has mentioned *nirveda* as the first *vyābhicārī*-*bhāva*, since it is the *sthāyī*-*bhāva* of *śānta-rasa*. This is the opinion of some."

asaṅgamān mādharma-mādhurīṇām aṇuṣṭe nīrasatām prayāte
vṛndāvane śīryati hā kuto 'sau prāṇity aṇuṣṭaḥ subalo dvirephaḥ

Without the presence of the sweetness of Mādhava, Vṛndāvana became withered, it lost its charm and its flowers. How, alas, does this unfortunate strong bee, Subala, continue to live?¹⁵² (BRS, 2. 4. 9)

2. 5. 5. The Sthāyi-bhāvas (Foundational Emotions)

The fifth *laharī* of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* treats the *sthāyi-bhāvas*. Like Bharata Muni in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, Rūpa Gosvāmī also uses the imagery of a paramount ruler for the *sthāyi*, able to subject to itself all other emotions, compatible or not:

aviruddhān viruddhān ca bhāvān yo vaśatām nayet
surājeva virājeta sa sthāyī bhāva ucyate
sthāyī bhāvo 'tra saḥ proktaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-viśaya ratiḥ
mukhyā gauṇī ca sā dvedhā rasa-jñaiḥ parikīrtitā

That emotion which dominates all compatible and incompatible emotions and shines forth like the best of all kings is called a foundational emotion. It is declared to be that love (*rati*) which takes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as its object. The knowers of *rasa* say that it is of two types, *mukhyā* (primary) and *gauṇī* (secondary). (BRS, 2. 5. 1-2)

The varieties of *bhakti-rasas* according to Rūpa Gosvāmī's system will be thoroughly dealt with in Chapter 4. For now, suffice it to say that with great ingenuity, Rūpa Gosvāmī succeeds in establishing a theory of five primary, *mukhya-bhakti-rasas*, and seven secondary, *gauṇa-bhakti-rasas*. Of those, the main *bhakti-rasa* is only one for a particular devotee, and he is additionally affected now and then with the secondary seven, thus coming to the number of eight *rasas* for each particular devotee, in agreement with the number of *rasas* in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*.

pañcadhāpi rater aikyān mukhyas tv eka ihoditaḥ
saptadhātṛa tathā gauṇā iti bhakti-raso 'ṣṭadhā
mukhyas tu pañcadhā śāntaḥ prītaḥ preyaṁś ca vatsalaḥ
madhuraś cety amī jñeyā yathā-pūrvam anuttamāḥ
hasyo 'dbhutas tathā vīraḥ karuṇo raudra ity api
bhayānakaḥ sa bibhatsa iti gauṇas ca saptadhā
evam bhakti-raso bhedaḥ dvayor dvādaśadhocyate

¹⁵² A double meaning occurs here: the word *dvirepha* can denote a bee, or a fool. *Subala* can be understood as a personal name, or an adjective 'very strong'. *Subala* calls himself a 'fool by the name *Subala*', or a 'very strong bee' that survives despite the withered appearance of Vṛndāvana.

vastutas tu purāṇāḍau pañcadhaiva vilokyate

Though there are five types of primary *rati*, only one is considered since only one is manifested as most prominent in an individual devotee. The one primary *rati* combines with the seven secondary *ratis* to form eight *ratis*, which produce eight *rasas* (for one person).

The primary *bhakti-rasas* are five: *śānta*, *prīta*, *preyān*, *vatsala* and *madhura*. The order of excellence is from the first to the last.

There are seven secondary *rasas*: *hāsyā*, *adbhuta*, *vīra*, *karuṇa*, *raudra*, *bhayānaka* and *bibhatsa*.

Thus there are twelve primary and secondary *rasas*, but in the *Purāṇas*, only the primary five are mentioned. (BRS, 2. 5. 114-117)¹⁵³

2. 5. 6. The Experience of Bhakti-rasa

The actual transformation of *sthāyī* into *rasa* is again described in terms similar to the analogies of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, but what is immediately apparent is the huge difference in quality of the devotional mellow in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, compared to mere mundane aesthetic enjoyment of a dramatic work. Obviously, the devotees do not experience the heights of *bhakti-rasa* only when they see a drama about the Lord; their latent love for the Lord transforms into *rasa* whenever the other appropriate elements of the devotionally inspiring aesthetic experience are present.

*ratir dvidhāpi kṛṣṇādyaiḥ śrutair avagatair smṛtaiḥ
tair vibhāvāditām yadbhis tad-bhakteṣu raso bhavet*

Both types of love (primary and secondary) are transformed into *rasa* in the devotees when they hear, see, or remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa and related factors that function as the excitants and the other aesthetic components. (BRS, 2. 5. 79)

*yatha dadhyādikaṁ dravyaṁ śarkarā-maricādibhiḥ
saṁyojana-viśeṣeṇa rasālākhyo raso bhavet
tad atra sarvathā sākṣāt kṛṣṇādy-anubhavādbhutaḥ
prauḍhānanda-camatkāro bhaktaiḥ ko 'py anurasyate*

Just as a substance consisting of yogurt and other ingredients, mixed in a special way with sugar and spices becomes the drink called *rasāla*, so here too, in the same way, the

¹⁵³ Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments that in the *Purāṇas*, the secondary *ratis* are treated as *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*.

devotees relish the inexpressible wonder of abundant joy (i.e. *rasa*) from a direct experience of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the other aesthetic components. (BRS, 2. 5. 80, 81)

sa ratyādi-vibhāvādyair ekī-bhāva-mayo 'pi san
jñapta-tattva-viśeṣaś ca tat tad udbhedato bhavet
yathā coktam –
pratīyamānāḥ prathamam vibhāvādyās tu bhāgaśaḥ
gacchanto rasa-rūpatvaṁ militā yānty akhaṇḍatām
yathā marīca-khaṇḍāder ekī-bhāve prapānake
udbhāsaḥ kasyacit kvāpi vibhāvādes tathā rase

Even though the *rasa* has become one with love and the other aesthetic components, such as the excitants, the special qualities of the various components of the *rasa* can still be perceived distinctly. For as it is said: The excitants and other aesthetic components are first recognized as separate units, but upon becoming *rasa*, they are mixed and achieve a seamless unity. Sometimes the individual ingredients can be tasted in a sherbet, even though there is a oneness of the sugar and spices. In a like manner, the individual excitants and other aesthetic components can sometimes be experienced distinctly in a *rasa*, even though they have achieved a oneness. (BRS, 2. 5. 82-84)

What follows is a consideration of the ingredients of devotional-aesthetic experience according to their function, and their traditional terminology:

rateḥ kāraṇa-bhūtā ye kṛṣṇa-kṛṣṇa-priyādayaḥ
stambhādyāḥ kārya-bhūtāś ca nirvedādyāḥ sahāyakāḥ
hitvā kāraṇa-kāryādi- śabda-vācyatvam atra te
rasodbodhe vibhāvādi- vyapadeśatvam āpnuyuḥ

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's dear devotees are the cause (*kāraṇa*) of love; actions such as becoming stunned are the results (*kārya*) of love, and such emotions as indifference are its auxiliaries (*sahāyaka*). In the context of *rasa*, the ordinary meaning of the terms 'cause', 'result' and 'auxiliary' is left behind and they assume the names excitant (*vibhāva*), indications (*anubhāva*) and transitory emotions (*vyabhicāri-bhāva*). (BRS, 2. 5. 85-86)

Short definitions of all three categories of aesthetic components are given again as:

rates tu tat-tad-āsvāda- viśeṣayātiyogyatām
vibhāvayanti kurvantīty uktā dhīraiḥ vibhāvakāḥ
tāś cānubhāvayanty antas tanvanty āsvāda-nirbharām
ityuktā anubhāvās te kaṭākṣādyā sa-sāttvikāḥ
sañcārayanti vaicitrīm nayante tām tathāvidhām
ye nirvedādayo bhāvās te tu sañcāriṇo matāḥ

The excitants (*vibhāvas*) are so called by the wise because they make possible (*vibhāvayanti*) the various kinds of special experiences of love.

Actions such as sidelong glances, along with the responses (*sāttvikas*), are called indications (*anubhāvas*) because they allow the love to be perceived (*anubhāvayanti*) and cause a deep experience of love to permeate the heart.

Emotions such as are judged to be transitory emotions because they cause love to wander (*sañcārayanti*) and in this way lead to variety in love. (BRS, 2. 5. 87-9)

The last *laharī* of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* concludes with additional definitions of *rasa* and *bhāva*: while *bhāva* remains a mere latent impression, made up of previous emotional *saṁskāras*, the *rasa* is the actual climax of the emotional experience, relished in a pure devoted heart.

vyatītya bhāvanā-vartma yaś camatkāra-bhāra-bhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bādhaṁ svadate sa raso mataḥ
bhāvanāyāḥ pade yas tu budhenānanya-buddhinā
bhāvvyate gāḍha-saṁskāraiś citte bhāvaḥ sa kathyate

Rasa is judged to be that which passes beyond the course of awareness (*bhāvanā*) and becomes an experience of abundant amazement that is relished intensely in a heart illuminated by purity.

Emotion (*bhāva*), however, is said to be that state of awareness (*bhāvanā*) which is experienced by means of the deep latent impressions (*saṁskāras*) in the heart of a wise person with focused intelligence. (BRS, 2. 5. 132-3)

Although seemingly similar to the mundane theory of aesthetic relish, the emotions studied by Rūpa Gosvāmī are nevertheless of a completely different quality. He impresses upon the readers again and again that the foundation of devotional aesthetic experience can only be one's deep, transcendent, pleasurable love towards God:

vibhāvatādīn ānīya kṛṣṇādīn mañjulā ratiḥ
etair eva tathābhūtaiḥ svam saṁvardhayaty asau
yathā svair eva salilaiḥ paripūrya balāhakān
ratnālayo bhavaty ebhir vṛṣṭaiḥ tair eva vāridhiḥ

This charming love makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa and related factors into an excitant and other related aesthetic components, and then expands itself by means of these very components. This process is just like the ocean which, having filled clouds with its own water, increases itself by means of this very rain water. (BRS, 2. 5. 94-95)

Such a thorough exposition of the principle of *bhakti-rasa* was obviously a desideratum in the medieval times, and the resistance to its appeal among the traditional poetic theorists is almost proverbial. The next chapter makes an overview

of the previous deliberations about the concept of *bhakti* as a separate *rasa* and shows its gradual increase in importance and a subsequent refinement of the notion.

Chapter Three

Traditional Objections to *Bhakti* as a *Rasa*

3. 1. The Appearance of Bhakti-rasa

3. 1. 1. Propositions for Additional Rasas

Speaking chronologically, one could say that in medieval times roughly preceding Rūpa Gosvāmī a need began to be felt by the literary society (reflecting the interest in the society at large by the influence of the medieval *bhakti* movements) of adding *śānta-rasa* and *bhakti-rasa* to the general eight *rasas* of Bharata. The propositions for such 'transcendent *rasas*' were often conditioned by the particular views on spirituality of these individual poetic and aesthetic theorists. The difference between *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa* spirituality is of course immediately apparent, the first of them favoring *śānta* as a *rasa* and the second *bhakti*. The poetic theorists felt another lacune existed in the theory of Bharata regarding the feelings of non-conjugal affection like friendship and parental love. Some theorists put all such feelings, as well as devotion to God, under a single heading of *preyān*. Others postulate *śānta* and *vatsala* (parental love) separately, but deny *bhakti* as a *rasa*. Still others, faithful to Bharata, seek to include *prīti* and *bhakti* in one of the existing *rasas*, hoping to show that the system of eight *rasas* covers the whole human experience.

As soon as discussions about the inclusion of new *rasas* into the system began, much opposition surfaced, either on the strength of the unchangeability and supreme authority of Bharata's system, or because of the spiritual nature of both *śānta* and *bhakti*, and their transcendent causes, which contrasted with the otherwise mundane system of dramatic sentiments. Some advocates for the inclusion of *bhakti* justly observe that it is ontologically much more permanent (*sthāyī*) than all of the eight mundane *sthāyī-bhāvas* of Bharata's theory. However, admitting new *rasas* into the fold disrupts the old system, and in the absence of regulations, new *rasas* of all kinds, emotions, ideas, even the *vyābhicārīs* and *sāttvikas* are believed by some theorists to be candidates for the position of a *rasa*. To avoid such confusion, some theorists felt compelled to deny *bhakti* the status of *rasa*, to keep Bharata's skeleton of the *rasa* theory intact.

The only solution was to step away from Bharata's mundane dramatic theory and deal with *bhakti-rasa* within its own theological sphere. Rūpa Gosvāmī, Bopadeva and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī have done so in their works, which are not exactly manuals of poetic theory but theological expositions and justifications of the existence of the transcendent *bhakti-rasas*. The results of their writings have spilled over into the field of aesthetic theory, and the arguments about *bhakti* have since been reconsidered. A poetic compendium which admits *bhakti-rasa* side-by-side with the ordinary *kāvya-rasas* is the *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* of Kavi Karnaṇpūra.

Apart from seeing *bhakti-rasa* in the context of its appearance in the frame of classical aesthetic theory, in one sense even the *sampradāya* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with which we are concerned here acknowledges the fact that the concept of *bhakti* did grow and become refined through time. On the other hand, the Caitanyaite, as other *Vaiṣṇava* and *bhakti* streams, certainly consider *bhagavad-bhakti* to be eternal, and its revelation in the world is similar to its revelation in any individual heart: it has been there since time immemorial, but on the condition of purity, it manifests itself fully. In the course of appearing in the 'heart of the poetic theory', so to speak, *bhakti-rasa* clears the way for itself by the removal of a few principal obstacles:

First is the predominance of the *nirguṇa* understanding of *rasa*, which equates *rasa* with *brahmāsvāda*, and thus limits it to *mokṣa*. And, as long as the highest ideal of transcendence is understood to be *nirguṇa-mokṣa*, the only 'spiritual kind of a *rasa*' we will be able to think of is *śānta*. In the world where *śānta-rasa* rules, *bhakti* can be seen as nothing more than an accessory to it, as Abhinavagupta has rightly observed.

Related to such ideas is the understanding that *bhakti* towards a *saguṇa-mūrti* is lower than the *nirguṇa-mokṣa*. That is of course turned upside down by Rūpa Gosvāmī, who places *śānta-rasa* at the lowest end of the possible relationships with the Lord; and all other *mukhya-rasas* in Rūpa Gosvāmī's system (i.e. *prīti*, *preyān*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya*) by far surpass mere *śānta* in their level of intimacy and defined nature of relationship with Bhagavān.

3. 1. 2. *Historical Precedents of Rūpa Gosvāmī's Theory*

The concept of *bhakti-rasa* has been articulated before Rūpa Gosvāmī by Bopadeva in his *Muktā-phala*¹⁵⁴, and its commentator Hemādri in his *Kaivalya-dīpikā*. Another author quoted by Rūpa Gosvāmī is Lakṣmīdhara¹⁵⁵.

Rūpa Gosvāmī seems to favor a certain poet-king of the southern provinces, Simha Bhūpāla, who wrote an extensive poetic manual named *Rasārṇava-sudhākara*. Rūpa Gosvāmī occasionally quotes him in both of his works on *rasa*, and bases his *Nāṭaka-candrikā* on his opinions about the theory of drama.

As Rūpa Gosvāmī does not fully agree with the aesthetic theory of Abhinavagupta, he seems to be averse to using the works on poetic theory that follow his understanding of the *rasa* experience. The most well-known theorists who include Abhinavagupta's explanations within their compendiums on poetic theory are Maṃmaṭācārya and Viśvanātha Kavirāja. Rūpa Gosvāmī does not himself address the issues on the *rasa*-hood of *bhakti* raised by these theorists, but Jīva Gosvāmī

¹⁵⁴ Rūpa Gosvāmī acknowledges his indebtedness to Bopadeva in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

¹⁵⁵ Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes from Lakṣmīdhara's *Nāma-kaumudī* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 3. 2. 2.

touches the subject in his *Sandarbhāṣa*. Following Abhinavagupta, Mammaṭa states in his *Kāvya-prakāśa*, *devādi-viṣayā ratir bhāvaḥ proktaḥ*, ‘affection directed at Divinities is only a *bhāva*’, and it needs to be investigated whether this explanation is the only possible understanding of the possible *rasas* in relationships directed towards the Divinities.

As far as the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* of Viśvanātha Kavirāja goes, Rūpa Gosvāmī states in the opening verses of his *Nāṭaka-candrikā* that he does not accept its views due to their not being in consonance with the views of Bharata. It is not clear what exactly the contentious issue is, most probably the interpretation of *rasa* according to Abhinavagupta which may have, on the whole, sounded non-traditional to Rūpa Gosvāmī – although he does accept the part of theory dealing with *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa* (generalization of emotions)¹⁵⁶. Viśvanātha Kavirāja also claims that the relationship between the *parodhā-nāyikā* and the *upapati* is a *rasābhāsa* (a mere semblance of *rasa*) because of *anaucitya* (impropriety). As Rūpa Gosvāmī extensively uses the model of the *nāyikās* (heroines) and *nāyaka* (hero) to describe the relationship of the *gopīs* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he must have felt the need to qualify Viśvanātha’s statement.¹⁵⁷

3. 2. *Bhakti Climbs the Ladder Towards Rasa*

How does *bhakti*, in terms of chronology, rise to the status of *rasa* – let us look at the stages of its implementation in the frame of relative history. Below is a list of writers on the theory of *alaṅkāra-śāstra* who variously articulate the *rasa* theory in their treatises. Some of them explicitly mention *bhakti* in their respective works, others merely wrestle with admitting even *śānta* among the usual eight *rasas*:

Bhāmaha (*Kāvya-lāṭikā*): *rasas* are treated under the *rasavad-alaṅkāra*

Daṇḍī (*Kāvya-darṣa*): mentions *bhakti* and *prīti* in his example for *preyo-alaṅkāra*

Udbhaṭa (*Kāvya-lāṭikā-sāra*): the first theorist to include *śānta* among the *rasas*

Rudraṭa (*Kāvya-lāṭikā*): the first theorist to include *preyān* among the *rasas*

Dhanañjaya (*Dāśarūpaka*): includes *bhakti* and *prīti* under *harṣa* and *utsāha*

Ānandavardhana (*Dhvanyāloka*): nine *rasas* (eight and *śānta*)

Abhinavagupta (*Abhinava-bhārati*, *Dhvanyāloka-locana*): *bhakti* is merely an *abhyantara-aṅga*, or *anubhāva* of *śānta-rasa*

Bhoja (*Āṭīgāra-prakāśa*, *Sarasvatī-kaṭhābhāṣa*): eleven *rasas*, but not *bhakti*

Mammaṭa (*Kāvya-prakāśa*): *bhakti* is only a *bhāva*

¹⁵⁶ This is a concept central to the aesthetic theory of Abhinavagupta, and will be addressed in Chapter 5.

¹⁵⁷ This is the topic of Chapter 2 of the second part of the thesis.

Viśvanātha Kavirāja (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*): *bhakti* is a *bhāva* only
 Bhānūdatta (*Rasa-taraṅginī*, *Rasa-maṭījarā*): distinguishes *laukika* and *alaukika* *rasas*
 Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha (*Rasa-gaṅgādhara*): *bhakti* is only a *vyabhicārī*
 Lakṣmīdhara (*Nāma-kaumudī*), Bopadeva (*Muktāphala*), Madhusūdana Sarasvatī
 (*Bhakti-rasāyana*), Kavi Karṇapūra (*Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*): *bhakti* is a full-fledged
rasa.

The authors mentioned above will now be treated separately, with quotes from their works and from secondary sources. Their chronology given below is only approximate, and fuller accounts must be sought elsewhere¹⁵⁸.

Some scholars, especially Western, do not attribute great antiquity to the *Agni Purāṇa*, which explicitly deals with many aspects of the poetic and aesthetic theory. Numerous chapters (from 336 to 346) of the *Agni Purāṇa* deal with many aspects of poetic theory, and chapter 338 in particular shortly delineates the doctrine of *rasa*. "Chapter 338 speaks of the *rasas* together with the *sthāyi-bhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *vyabhicārī-bhāvas*, the *ālambana-vibhāva* and *uddīpana-vibhāva*, the various kinds of heroes and their companions and the heroines (*nāyikā*), the eight qualities of heroes and the eight *vibhāvas* of heroines."¹⁵⁹ The most important verses from the chapter on sentiments are quoted here:

agnir uvāca
 akṣaram paramam brahma sanātanam ajam vibhum
 vedāntesu vadanty ekaṁ caitanyam jyotir īśvaram
 ānanda sahas tasya vyajyate ca kadācana
 vyaktiḥ sā tasya caitanya- camatkāra-rasāhvayā
 ādya tasya vikāro yaḥ so 'haṁkāra iti smṛtaḥ
 tato 'bhimānas tatredam samāptam bhuvana-trayam
 abhimānād ratiḥ sā ca pariṇāśam upēyusī
 vyabhicāryādi-sāmānyāc chṛṅgāra iti gīyate
 tad-bhedāḥ kāmam itare hāsyādyaḥ apy anekāśaḥ
 sva-sva-sthāyi-viśeṣo 'tha parighoṣa-sva-lakṣaṇāḥ

The indestructible Supreme Brahman, who is eternal, unborn and all-pervading, is described in the *Vedānta* as the unified consciousness, as the supreme light, or as the Supreme Lord. His natural quality is that of bliss, and that bliss is sometimes manifested. Its manifestation is the wonder of consciousness described as a *rasa*. Its first material transformation is believed to be the *ahaṁkāra* (the false ego). Its further manifestation, *abhimāna* (conceited notions about oneself) is found throughout the three worlds. From such *abhimāna* appears *rati* (the *sthāyi* of *śṛṅgāra*) and, upon being nourished with the aggregate of aesthetic ingredients, it is known as *śṛṅgāra*. From it

¹⁵⁸ Most informative works in the field are S. K. De's *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, and P. V. Kane's work of the same title, see References.

¹⁵⁹ P. V. Kane, *The History of Sanskrit Poetics*, p. 7.

spring the many other varieties of *rasas*, like *hāsyā* and so on. Each of them has its own *sthāyī* and its own pronounced definition. (AP, 338. 1-5)¹⁶⁰

The usual sleight of hand in Western academic works on the *Agni Purāṇa* is to compare its definition of *kāvya* with later individual treatises on poetic theory, and conclude that, for example, since Daṇḍī's definition is exactly the same as in the *Agni Purāṇa*¹⁶¹, this must necessarily mean that the parts of the *Agni Purāṇa* which deal with poetry are a later addition into the *Purāṇa*. It is, however, even more probable that the situation was just the opposite: Daṇḍī quotes a reliable *Purāṇic* source, and spares himself the pains of inventing a new definition. But that is of course an entirely different subject.

The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* is another traditional text which is interesting for adding *śānta* to the regular eight *rasas*, stating *vairāgya* as its *sthāyī* and the Supreme Lord as its presiding deity¹⁶².

Most of these theoretical writers are the founders of various schools of poetic theory, some favoring *alaṅkāras* (poetic figures) as the most distinctive aspect of poetry, others *guṇas* (excellences) and still others *rītis* (styles). Despite the sometimes fierce opposition and counter-arguments, all these theories usually tend to describe much the same thing: an element of wonder, an aesthetic relish, that the poet should produce in poetry, and the reader experience. All the definitions of *kāvya* and the theories built on those definitions have attempted to articulate that element of aesthetic relish in poetry.

It may be a misguided search to look for *rasa* in the works of the earliest poetic theorists who seemed to be content with definitions of *kāvya*, *guṇas*, *alaṅkāras*, *doṣas*, *rītis* and *vṛttis*. The theory of *rasa* was considered a part of the tradition of *nāṭya* as preserved in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, and it took some time that the theory of *rasa* became abstract enough in the minds of the theorists to be successfully applied to poetry as well. Only later poetic theorists begin with including the thorough discussion on *rasa* within their poetic treatises. We usually assign that to the time of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, and the poetic theorists who follow their interpretations. The two authors propound the theory of *dhvani* (suggestion), which is intricately connected with the theory of *rasa*. Therefore, even if the first poetic

¹⁶⁰ I have consulted: M. N. Dutt (Ed. by K. L. Joshi), *Agni Mahā-Purāṇam* (Delhi 2001); N. Gangadharan, *Agni Purāṇa* (Delhi 1987); Suresh Mohan Bhattacharya, *The Alaṅkāra Section of the Agni Purāṇa* (Calcutta 1976).

¹⁶¹ *Agni Purāṇa*: *saṁkṣepāt vākyam iṣṭārtha-vyacchinnā padāvalī kāvyam*. Daṇḍī (KĀ, 1. 10): *śarīraṁ tāvad iṣṭārtha-vyavacchinnā padāvalī*.

¹⁶² *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* 3. 30. 2, 8: *śānto rasah svatanthro 'tra prthag eva vyavasthitah / śāntasya devo vijñeyaḥ paraḥ puruṣa eva tu / śāntasya tu samutpattiḥ nṛpa vairāgyataḥ smṛtaḥ*. (The *Nāṭya-śāstra* also gives each *rasa* its presiding Deity, Viṣṇu for *śṛṅgāra*, Rudra for *raudra*, Brahmā for *adbhuta* and so on.) Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes from the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* in BRS, 3. 1. 48, on the topic of *śānta-rasa*.

theorists do not mention *rasas*, it is far from correct to conclude that the concept did not 'yet' exist, or that they were ignorant of it.

3. 2. 1. *Bhāmaha, 7th century A.D. (Kāvyaṭaṅkāra)*

Bhāmaha is probably one of the earliest known writers on poetic theory whose work, the *Kāvyaṭaṅkāra*, is available to us¹⁶³. It is clear that the concept of *rasa* is known to these poetic theorists even if they do not explicitly deal with *rasas*, or if they are not advocates of what has come to be known as the 'school of *rasa*', as opposed to the defenders of the primacy of *alaṅkāra*, *guṇa* or *rīti* in poetry. Bhāmaha, although being the champion of the superiority of *alaṅkāras* in poetry, nevertheless touches on the subject of *rasas* in his work.

The attitude of Bhāmaha to the *rasa* theory is distinctly that of an exponent of a rival school of criticism; and this is clear from the scanty treatment he accords to it. He who holds that *alaṅkāras* exhaust the chief characteristics of poetry naturally brings *rasa* also under an *alaṅkāra* called 'rasavat' (3. 6): *rasavad-darśita-spaṣṭa-śṛṅgārādi-rasaṁ yathā, devī samāgamad dharma maskariṇy atirohitā*. He further recognizes two others – *preyān* and *ūrjasvī* – which represent the sentiment of spiritual love and consciousness of superior might (3. 57)¹⁶⁴. But he betrays his knowledge of all the *rasas* when he says, *yuktaṁ loka-svabhāvena rasaiś ca sakalaiḥ pṛthak* (1. 21) – meaning that in the drama all the *rasas* should be delineated. He is also fully alive to the delectableness of tender sentiments, and he feels that they are the best vehicle to inculcate even moral principles: *svādu-kāvya-rasonmiśraṁ śāstram apy upayunjate / prathamāliḍha-madhavaḥ pibanti kaṭu-bheṣajam* (1. 3).¹⁶⁵

Bhāmaha thus covers the traditional *rasas* in the *alaṅkāra* called *rasavat*, and collects all other non-conjugal forms of affection, like friendship and devotion, under the *alaṅkāra* *preyān*. His *ūrjasvī*, an *alaṅkāra* expressing the sense of might, is extremely similar to *utsāha*, and the concomitant *vīra-rasa*. It is hard to understand the logic of establishing a separate category for it.

¹⁶³ For an old but thorough overview on the chronology of Bhāmaha and Daṇḍī, see P. V. Kane, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, pp. 78-133.

¹⁶⁴ Bhāmaha quotes the following two examples for *preyān* and *ūrjasvī* respectively (Vidura's love towards Kṛṣṇa, and Karna's haughtiness): *preyo gṛhāgataṁ kṛṣṇam avādīt viduro yathā – adya yā mama govinda jātā tvayi gṛhāgate / kālenaiśā bhavet prītis tavaivāgamanāt punaḥ. ūrjasvī karṇena yathā pāṛthāya punar āgataḥ – diviḥ sandadhāti kiṁ karṇaḥ śalyety ahir apakṛtaḥ*.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted from A. Sankaran, *Some Aspects of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit of the Theories of Rasa and Dhvani* (New Delhi, 1973), p. 24.

3. 2. 2. Daṇḍī, 7th century A.D. (*Kāvyādarśa*)

In a similar vein, Daṇḍī covers the *rasas* by establishing three distinct *alaṅkāras*, *preyān*, *rasavat* and *ūrjasvī*. *Preyān* is non-conjugal love or admiration which, in his system, includes emotions directed to Divinities, while *ūrjasvī* is again an expression of a heightened sense of might. Daṇḍī works with the traditional eight *rasas* of Bharata. He is a protagonist of the 'guṇa school', lifting the ten *guṇas* (excellences) to utmost importance in poetry¹⁶⁶. But in his definition of the *guṇa* called *mādhurya* (sweetness), he reveals the assistance of *rasas* in the production of excellent poetry.

Daṇḍī's attitude towards the theory of *rasa* is a continuance of the one taken by Bhāmaha; and following him, he too brings the *rasas* under the three *alaṅkāras* *preyān*, *rasavat* and *ūrjasvī*. But probably owing to the influence of poets or his own sympathy and feeling for the delectableness of the *rasas* he sets greater store by them and also devotes greater space in his *Kāvyādarśa* (see 2. 275-291).¹⁶⁷ He first defines the three and illustrates them in the following verses. The instance of *preyān* is the same as Bhāmaha's. He fully expounds the most striking characteristic of each of the eight *rasas* of Bharata and gives excellent verses in illustration. The very sweetness of these verses exhibits clearly his keen perception of that element in poetry which appeals most to the heart or which moves and entrances the reader, viz., the *rasas*. In spite of his own theory that the *guṇas* are the life of poetry, being a poet he is probably overpowered by feeling for this element in poetry and is forced to recognize it to be quite as appealing as the *guṇas*.

Defining the *guṇa* of *mādhurya* (*Kāvyādarśa*, 2. 292), he states, "It has been shown that, of composition which is the acme of refinement, *mādhurya* or sweetness is the essence. Here it is stated that the life of poetic language is the delineation of the *rasas*.¹⁶⁸" Making a distinction between *śṛṅgāra* and *preyān*, he says that the first has *rati* as its *sthāyī*, while *prīti* (non-conjugal love) is incapable of becoming a *rasa* and remains merely an *alaṅkāra* called *preyān* (*Kāvyādarśa*, 2. 289).

¹⁶⁶ The *guṇas* are traditionally ten, but most of the theorists reduce them to the main three: *mādhurya*, *ojas* and *prasāda*.

¹⁶⁷ In the footnote Sankaran quotes Daṇḍī's definition: *preyaḥ priyatarākyānaṁ rasavad rasa-peśalam / ūrjasvī rūḍhāhaṁkāraṁ yuktotkarṣaṁ tu tat trayam*.

¹⁶⁸ *vākyaśyāgrāmyatā-yoner mādhuryaṁ darśito rasaḥ / iha tv aṣṭa-rasāyattā rasavattā smṛtā girām*, quoted in Sankaran, p 26.

3. 2. 3. Udbhaṭa, 8th century A.D. (*Kāvyālaṅkāra-sāra*)

Udbhaṭa follows Bhāmaha and Bharata in his exposition. He is, however, the first to include *śānta-rasa* in the list of the eight *rasas* (KĀS, 4. 4). His commentary on the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, where he has probably dealt with the *rasas* much more extensively, is unfortunately lost¹⁶⁹. Udbhaṭa argues that *preyān* is the poetry of *bhāva*, *bhāva-kāvya*, and distinguishes it from *rasavat* which, according to him, is *rasa-kāvya*. This peculiar separation was not acceptable to the later theorists.

3. 2. 4. Rudraṭa, 10th century A.D. (*Kāvyālaṅkāra*)

Like Udbhaṭa, Rudraṭa also admits *śānta* within the circle of *rasas*, and attributes to it a *sthāyī* named *saṃyag-jñāna*, or *tattva-jñāna* (complete, true knowledge). He describes *śānta-rasa* as renunciation, an absence of mundane attachments and aversions, that springs up in the heart from *vibhāvas* like understanding the actual state of the world. Its *anubhāvas* are fear of rebirth and so on. (KĀ, 21. 3 and 15. 15-16). Rudraṭa is the first one to accept *preyān* (non-conjugal love) into the category of *rasas* as well, making his number of *rasas* ten (KĀ, 12. 3). He proposes *sneha* (affection) as its *sthāyī*, and seems to think of it mainly in terms of friendship (KĀ, 16. 18).

3. 2. 5. Dhanañjaya, 10th century A.D. (*Daśarūpaka*)

Dhanañjaya makes it a point to stay faithful to the categorization of Bharata. He does not accept *śānta* as a separate *rasa*, his reason being that it cannot be presented in a drama¹⁷⁰. Dhanañjaya subsumes *prīti* and *bhakti* under *harṣa* and *utsāha*. *Harṣa* itself not being a *sthāyī*, it is difficult to understand his logic. In the same verse, he mentions hunting (*mṛgayā*) and dicing (*akṣa*) as special *rasas*, which shows that, once the traditional boundaries of the eight *sthāyīs* and eight *rasas* are broken down, the imagination of the theorists suddenly knows no bounds. Dhanañjaya desists from any innovation, good or bad.

prīti-bhakti-ādayo bhāvā mṛgayākṣādayo rasāḥ

¹⁶⁹ V. Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas* (Chennai, 1967), p. 47.

¹⁷⁰ *śamam api kecit prāhuḥ puṣṭir nāṭyeṣu naitasya* (*Daśarūpaka*, 4. 44) in: George C. O. Haas, *The Daśarūpa, A Treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy* (Delhi, 1912), p. 124.

harṣotsāhādiṣu spaṣṭam antarbhāvān na kīrtitāḥ

The emotions of friendship (*prīti*), devotion (*bhakti*), and the like, and the sentiments of hunting (*mṛgayā*), gambling (*akṣa*), and the like, are not enumerated separately in this work because they are clearly included in joy (*harṣa*) and enthusiasm (*utsāha*), and the rest. (DR, 4. 88)¹⁷¹

3. 2. 6. *Ānandavardhana, 10th century A.D. (Dhvanyāloka)*

Ānandavardhana is credited with establishing the theory of *dhvani* (suggestion) as the actual soul of poetry. The *rasas* have a very important role to play in the theory which has sweepingly become one of the most acceptable articulations of the poetic experience, up to the present day.

yo 'rthaḥ sahr̥daya-slāghyaḥ kāvyātmeti vyavasthitaḥ
vācya-pratīyamānākhyau tasya bhedāv ubhau smṛtau
tatra vācyaḥ prasiddho yaḥ prakārair upamādibhiḥ
bahudhā vyākṛtaḥ so 'nyaiḥ tato neha pratanyate
pratīyamānaṁ punar anyad eva vastv asti vāñīṣu mahā-kavīnām
yat tat prasiddhāv ayavātiriktaṁ vibhāti lāvaṇyam ivāṅganāsu

That meaning which wins the admiration of refined critics is decided to be the soul of poetry. The 'explicit' (*vācya*) and 'implicit' (*pratīyamāna*) are its two aspects.

Of these, the explicit is commonly known and it has been already set forth in many ways through figures of speech such as the simile by other writers; hence it need not be discussed here at length.

But the implicit aspect is quite different from this. In the words of first-rate poets it shines supreme and towers above the beauty of the striking external constituents even as charm in ladies. (DhvĀ, 1. 2-4)

Ānandavardhana thus secures the primarity of *dhvani* in poetry over and above the previous propositions, like *alaṅkāra*, *guṇa* and *rīti*. According to the superiority of *dhvani*, he understands *dhvani-kāvya* as the highest (which most often means *rasa-kāvya*), while *kāvya* where *dhvani* is subordinated is the middling, and simple *alaṅkāras* in *kāvya* without *dhvani* are the lowest form of poetry in his judgment.

Ānandavardhana accepts the eight *rasas* and the *sānta*, and gives *tr̥ṣṇā-kṣaya-sukha* (the joy upon the cessation of desires) as its *sthāyī*. *Bhakti* does not have a regular place in his theory; a charming verse in his *Dhvanyāloka* is unfortunately only an example of the mixing of *dhvani* and *alaṅkāra*:

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 147.

Vol. 41, No. 1, January 1, 1929
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance
Single copies, 15 cents

CONTENTS

Original Articles
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male

Original Articles (Continued)
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male

Original Articles (Continued)
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male

Original Articles (Continued)
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male
The Effect of the Diet on the Blood Sugar in the Normal Adult Male

yā vyāpāravati rasān rasayitum kācit kavīnām navā
 dṛṣṭir yā pariniṣṭhitārtha-viṣayonmeṣā ca vaipaściti
 te dve apy avalambya viśvam anīṣaṁ nirvarṇayanto vayaṁ
 śrāntā naiva ca labdham abdhi-śayana tvad-bhakti-tulyaṁ sukham

O Abdhi-śayana [Viṣṇu], we have become weary trying to use the novel poetic observations to produce aesthetic relish, and the scientific analytical intellect to study the elements of creation. With both of these, we have ceaselessly tried to understand and describe the world around us. But even after all this endeavor, we have not found any happiness comparable to the joy of devotion to You.¹⁷²

Abhinavagupta, the prolific author that we will discuss below, wrote a commentary to the *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana, called the *Locana*. Commenting on the above verse, he writes¹⁷³: “This stanza is the utterance of the author (Ānandavardhana), who began by first being a devotee of God, and then, simply out of curiosity, adopted both the view-points of the poet and the philosopher (but found them ultimately unsatisfying) and once again came to believe that rest in devotion to God was inevitable (*yuktā*). For we have already explained¹⁷⁴ that the happiness which results from (conceptual understanding) of both seen and unseen objects which are ascertained (*pariniṣcita*), by all the means of valid cognition (i.e. philosophy) or even that transcendent joy which consists in relishing an aesthetic experience – to both of these the bliss that comes from finding rest in God is far superior (*prakṛṣyate*); and that aesthetic pleasure (*rasāsvāda*) is only the reflection (*avabhāsa*) of a drop (*vipruṣ*) of that mystic bliss. But ordinary worldly happiness is for the most part (*prāya*) inferior to even aesthetic delight, because it is mixed with abundant (*bahutara*) suffering as well. This is the essence of what he means.”

3. 2. 7. *Abhinavagupta, 11th century (Locana, Abhinavabhāratī)*

The full impact of Abhinavagupta on the aesthetic theory will be dealt with in the later chapters. This Kashmirian philosopher and aesthetic theorist has written, aside from the commentary *Locana* to the *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana, a full commentary on the *Nāṭya-śāstra* called the *Abhinava-bhāratī*¹⁷⁵. He accepts *śānta* as the greatest *rasa* into which all other *rasas* ultimately merge. He finds passages in the

¹⁷² Acharya Jagannath Pathak, *Dhvanyāloka* (Varanasi, 2000), p. 541-42.

¹⁷³ The translation is taken from J. L. Masson, M. V. Patwardhan, *Śānta-rasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics* (Pune 1969), pp. 157-8.

¹⁷⁴ The translators admit that they have not come across any elaboration in the existing works of Abhinavagupta. Obviously then, his theory remains somewhat mysterious and unclear, with no hope of further clarification in the future.

¹⁷⁵ It is, however, only partly available today.

Nāṭya-śāstra that hint at Bharata's provisional acceptance of *śānta*, although it is rather clear that those who have tried to interpolate it into Bharata's text were struggling to do so¹⁷⁶. Abhinavagupta, by making *śānta* the highest *rasa* of *mokṣa*, towering above the other mundane *rasas*, avoids the trouble of proving that Bharata accepted it within the regular *rasas*, which would obviously be a hard task¹⁷⁷. He postulates *nirveda*, born of real knowledge of the world, as its *sthāyī*, and comments that there is little difference between such *nirveda* and other propositions for the *sthāyī* like *vairāgya*, *trṣṇā-kṣaya-sukha*, *samyag-jñāna* or *śama*. He includes *bhakti* and *śraddhā* as its two *anubhāvas*, thus making them completely subservient to *śānta*. He also allows for *bhakti* and *śraddhā* in other *vyabhicārīs* like *smṛti*, *matī*, *dhṛti* and *utsāha*, denying them an independent existence¹⁷⁸. On the whole, his treatment of *bhakti* is unsatisfactory; his preference for *mokṣa* and *śānta* eclipses the meaning of, and need for *bhakti*.

Rudratā, who admitted *preyān* as a *rasa* and prescribed *sneha* as its *sthāyī*, mentions in his *Kāvya-lankāra* that other theorists considered establishing *sneha* as a *rasa*, with a *sthāyī ārdratā* (tenderness). Abhinavagupta is not impressed. He comments:

ārdratā-sthāyiko sneho rasa iti tv asat. sneho hy abhiṣaṅgaḥ. sa ca raty-utsāhādāv eva paryavasyati. tathā hi – bālasya mātā-pitrādaḥ sneho bhaye viśrāntaḥ, yūno mitrajane ratau, lakṣmaṇādeḥ bhrātari dharma-vīra eva. eva vṛddhasya putrādāv api draṣṭavyam.

The proposition for the *rasa sneha* with *ārdratā* as its *sthāyī* is untenable. *Sneha* is actually an intense attachment. It resides within *rati*, *utsāha* and such. Therefore, the affection of a child towards the parents is included under *bhaya*, the affection of young persons towards their friends is included under *rati*, the affection of brothers like Lakṣmaṇa is included in *dharma-vīra* and so on. That is how the affection of old people towards their offspring is to be understood as well.¹⁷⁹

In his work *The Number of Rasas*, prof. Raghavan is not very happy about these sweepingly reductionistic comments of Abhinavagupta, and upon citing the words of Abhinavagupta quoted above, writes:

¹⁷⁶ Making sommersault changes in the verses which enumerate the eight *rasas*, to include the ninth, *śānta*. The interpolators include a delineation of *śānta* at the end of the sixth chapter of *Nāṭya-śāstra*, making *śama* its *sthāyī*.

¹⁷⁷ From Masson and Patwardhan, pp. 120-143.

¹⁷⁸ *ata eva īśvara-praṇidhāna-viśaye bhakti-śraddhe smṛti-matī-dhṛty-utsāhānupraviṣṭe anyathaiva aṅgam (śāntasya) iti na tayorḥ pṛthag-rasatvena gaṇanam.* Abhinava-bhāratī, quoted in Raghavan (1967), p. 122.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 123. A smart distinction has been produced by Hemacandra, author of the *Kāvya-anuśāsana*: *sneho bhaktir vātsalyam iti hi rater eva viśeṣāḥ. tulyayorḥ yā parasparam ratiḥ sa snehaḥ. anuttamasya uttame ratiḥ prasaktiḥ, saiva bhakti-pada-vācyā. uttamasya anuttame ratiḥ vātsalyam. evam ādau ca viśaye bhāvasyaiva āsvādyatvam.* Published in the *Kāvya-mālā* Series, Nirṇaya Sāgar Press, 1901, p. 68.

This dismisses *prīti*, *sneha*, *vātsalya* and similar *rasas* based on attachment. This is not a commendable attitude. To have less distinctions is no great aim. If it is said that friendship is only a variety of *rati* what should we call the *rasa* in the association of Rāma and Sugrīva, and Rākṣasa and Candanadāsa? It cannot be brought under *rati*. If brotherly attachment again is brought under *rati*, what is the *rasa* in the association of Rāma and Bharata, or Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa? If *dharma-vīra* can be called forth to deny *rasatva* to Lakṣmaṇa's attachment to Rāma, why should not opponents of *śānta* call forth another kind of *vīra* to deny *rasatva* to *śānta*? Do Abhinavagupta and Hemacandra mean that friendship, brotherly attachment, parental affection and the like are only *bhāvas* that cannot be nourished into the state of *rasa* with the attendant accessories? Literature is only too full of these types of attachment. The instance of Daśaratha's death due to separation from Rāma is ample proof for the existence of *vātsalya* as a major mood, fit to be developed and fit to be relished.¹⁸⁰

3. 2. 8. King Bhoja of Malva, 11th century (*Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa* and *Sarasvatī-kaṇṭhābharaṇa*)

Many scholars have proposed Rūpa Gosvāmī's agreement with Bhoja, a versatile writer and king of Malwa. In his *Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa* and the *Sarasvatī-kaṇṭhābharaṇa*, related works who deal with aesthetics, grammar and poetics, Bhoja seems to follow the concept of *rasa* propounded in the *Agni Purāṇa*¹⁸¹. The *Agni Purāṇa* positions *śṛṅgāra* as the highest, first *rasa*, born of *ahaṅkāra* and *abhimāna*. Rūpa Gosvāmī also raises *mādhurya* (his spiritual variety of *śṛṅgāra*) to the highest position, and also uses the concept of *abhimāna* in the sense of the personal identity of the devotee in relation to the Supreme. However, the similarity with Bhoja's theory is only apparent, as Bhoja does not allow *bhakti* as a *rasa* in his poetic theory at all, although he increases the number of *rasas* from the traditional eight to twelve. The fact that he favors *śṛṅgāra* as the highest, even the only *rasa*, is also hardly comparable to the theory of Rūpa Gosvāmī, who does not deal with mundane *rasas* at all, but builds his *bhakti-rasas* on the foundation of liberation from material attachments.

Bhoja, it is usually believed, accepts the traditional eight *rasas* of Bharata, and adds to them *śānta*, *uddhata*, *preyān* and *ūrjasvī*¹⁸². With this move, he hopes to secure separate *rasas* for all four varieties of heroes, thus matcing the *dhīra-śānta* hero with *śānta-rasa*, the *dhīra-lalita* hero with *preyān*, the *dhīrodātta* hero with *ūrjasvī*, and the *dhīroddhata* hero with the *uddhata-rasa*. As one struggles through his voluminous writings on aesthetics, one bumps into various other ideas on the number and kinds

¹⁸⁰ Raghavan (1967), pp. 123-24.

¹⁸¹ A thorough study has been carried out by Prof. V. Raghavan in his work *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa*, (Madras 1963).

¹⁸² At the beginning of his *Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa*, however, he accepts ten *rasas*, the regular eight with *vatsala* and *śānta*.

of *rasas*, so that the critics and opponents have a difficult time even knowing what exactly they are opposing. At some point in the *Sarasvatī-kaṇṭhābharaṇa*, he breaks down the distinctions between the *vyabhicārīs* and the *sthāyīs*, saying that some *sthāyīs* are acknowledged even by Bharata as acting in the form of *vyabhicārīs* for another *rasa*. He promptly invents a few other *rasas*, like *pāravaśya* (dependence) and *svātantrya* (independence), or *vilāsa*, *ānanda* and *anurāga*. Finally, he goes as far as treating the *sāttvikas* as *rasas* as well, making an *aśru-rasa* (crying) and similar outrageous propositions. In the midst of this confusion, he consoles us that none of those *rasas* are real *rasas*, for the real *rasa* is transcendental, and the mundane ones appear out of *abhimāna*, material identification of the soul.¹⁸³

3. 2. 9. Mammaṭa, 12th century A.D. (*Kāvya-prakāśa*)

Mammaṭa follows the views of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta. In the fourth *ullāsa* of his *Kāvya-prakāśa*, he deals with *dhvani-kāvya*. He explains *dhvani* (suggestion) as that kind of poetry where the expressed meaning is not intended at all. Jokes with an opposite meaning would be an example. Another kind of *dhvani* is such where the expressed meaning is intended, but it has a deeper meaning behind it. This is the articulation of the theory of *rasa* in poetics, where descriptions of *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and other elements of the aesthetic experience extend to suggest a deep aesthetic relish in the heart of a connoisseur. Such suggested meaning is twofold, it can flash across the mind without a perceptible sequence (in the aesthetic relish of *rasas*), or, it appears through a mental analysis of the contents, in a visible sequence (through the power of the words, their meaning, or both).

In the fourth *ullāsa* of the *Kāvya-prakāśa*, verses 26-37, Mammaṭa deals with the non-sequential *dhvani* (*asaṃlakṣya-krama-vyaṅgya*) – these are the *bhāvas* in poetry which, augmented with *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhicārīs*, imperceptibly ripen into *rasas* in the heart of the reader of poetry. Mammaṭa distinguishes such *dhvani* from the mere *alaṅkāra* called *rasavat*, although such distinctions are more or less technical. *Rasa* has finally attained prominence in poetic theory, and resists the attempts to treat it as a mere subspecies of *alaṅkāra* from this point on.

In Mammaṭa's work, *bhāvas* and *rasas* are eight like in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, but at the end of enumerating the *rasas*, *sthāyi-bhāvas* and the *vyabhicārīs*, he adds that a ninth *rasa* exists, *śānta*, with *nirveda* as its *sthāyī*, although only eight are admissible in

¹⁸³ V. Raghavan, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa* (Madras 1963), pp. 443-50.

drama¹⁸⁴. *Nirveda* is, however, at least in accordance with Bharata's system, enumerated already among the *vyabhicārīs*. His next verse is important:

*ratir devādi-viṣayā vyabhicārī tathāñjitaḥ
bhāvaḥ proktaḥ*

Love directed towards the gods (sages, teacher, king, son etc.) as well as the suggested *vyabhicārī* are called emotion, *bhāva*. (KP, 4. 35-6)¹⁸⁵

What this means is that he denies the feelings of devotional affection a status of *sthāyī* which could develop into a full-fledged *rasa*. Since no valid reasons are given, it is difficult to follow his logic. Perhaps this is so because – before the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs – no one ever dared to imagine the perfection of *bhakti* to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as enabling one to enter Their supreme abode and become Their attendant. Rare, for example, have been the emotional *bhaktas* of Lord Śiva in history who have, in a way, dared to compete with Pārvatī Devī by choosing to cultivate a relationship in *śṛṅgāra-rasa* with Lord Śiva. Usually that is understood as an example of *anaucitya*, impropriety, at least as far as the poetic theory goes. But, by the mercy of the Gosvāmīs, a path of devotion is now open where the deep emotional involvement in the highest *rasas* is encouraged and leads to the revelation in the heart of a particular devotee of his inherent loving feelings for the Lord, similar in kind to the love of the *gopīs*.

3. 2. 10. Bopadeva, 13th century (*Muktāphala*)

In his *Muktāphala*, Bopadeva describes *bhakti-rasa* as: *vyāsādi-vivarnitasya viṣṇor viṣṇu-bhaktānām vā caritasya nava-rasātmakasya śravaṇādīnā janitāś camatkāro bhakti-rasaḥ*, “*Bhakti-rasa*, consisting of nine *rasas*, is the wonder produced by hearing the scriptural descriptions by Vyāsadeva and others, of the activities of Viṣṇu and His devotees.” Bopadeva postulates *bhakti-rasa* as the overarching term for all relations with the Supreme Lord, then dividing it into nine separate *rasas*, the eight *rasas* of Bharata and *śānta*. Since Bopadeva deals only with *bhakti-rasas*, and since *Muktāphala* is not a treatise on poetic theory, he can avoid the trouble of considering *bhakti-rasa* within the poetic theory. He presents it on its own grounds, and the foundation of his theory is the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

¹⁸⁴ Since the original verse of the *Nāṭya-śāstra* which enumerates the *rasas*, has the word ‘*nāṭye*’, meaning ‘in drama’, some theorists take this to mean that *śānta* may only exist in poetry, but cannot be represented on stage.

¹⁸⁵ R. C. Dwivedi, *The Poetic Light – Kāvya-prakāśa of Mammata* (Delhi, 1977), p. 91.

**3. 2. 11. Viśvanātha Kavirāja, 14th century A.D.
(Sāhitya-darpaṇa)**

Like Mammaṭa, Viśvanātha Kavirāja also follows Abhinavagupta's ideas on *rasāsvāda*. The third *pariccheda* of his compendium, the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, deals with aesthetics.

vibhāvenānubhāvena vyaktaḥ sañcāriṇā tathā
rasatām eti ratyādiḥ sthāyi-bhāvaḥ sacetasām
sattvodrekād akhaṇḍa-sva- prakāśānanda-cinmayāḥ
vedyāntara-sparśa-śūṇyo brahmāsvāda-sahodaraḥ
lokottara-camatkāra- prāṇaḥ kaiścit pramāṭṛbhiḥ
svākāravad abhinnatvenāyam āsvādyate rasaḥ

Love and the like which is the foundational emotion, brought out into manifestation not by the direct mention thereof, but by an excitant, an indication and a transitory emotion, attains to the condition of a sentiment in the man of poetic sensibility.

This sentiment, arising from the exaltation of purity, indivisible, self-illuminating and full of joy, free from contact with anything else to be known, is like a brother to the tasting of the Supreme Brahman by the sages.

This sentiment consists of otherworldly wonder and it is enjoyed by the competent relishers as inseparable from its effect. (SD, 3. 1-3)¹⁸⁶

Viśvanātha adds *vatsala* (parental love) and *śānta* to the traditional eight *rasas*, giving *sneha* or *vatsalatā* (parental affection) and *śama* (peacefulness) as their *sthāyīs*. He seems to reduce feelings of *bhakti* to various other categories here and there in his theory, under *śānta* or under *dharma-vīra*. Like Mammaṭa, he is content with giving love of God the position of an incomplete *bhāva*.

sañcāriṇaḥ pradhānāni devādi-viśayā ratih
udbuddha-mātra sthāyī ca bhāva ity abhidhīyate

The principal transitory emotions, as well as love for a deity, *guru*, son etc., and the *sthāyī* which is merely awakened and then quelled again, are called *bhāva*. (SD, 3. 260)

As an example of love for God, he quotes a verse from the *Mukunda-mālā-stotra* of King Kulaśekhara, and adds examples of love for a saint, and love for a king. Enumerating the semblances of *rasas* caused by impropriety, he lists the reasons and circumstances for such impropriety, giving 'love directed to a secondary hero' as an example of *śṛṅgāra-rasābhāsa*. The example, he writes, is his own:

¹⁸⁶ The translation roughly follows: J. R. Ballantyne, Pramada Dasa Mitra (Tr.), *The Sāhitya-darpaṇa or Mirror of Composition of Viśvanātha* (Delhi, 1975), pp. 39-40.

svāmī mugdhataro vanam ghanam idam bālāham ekākinī
 kṣoṇīm āvṛṇute tamāla-malina-cchāyā tamaḥ-santatiḥ
 tan me sundara muñca kṛṣṇa sahasā vartmeti gopyā girāḥ
 śrutvā tām parirabhya manmatha-kalāsakto hariḥ pātu vaḥ

Simple enough is my husband, thick is this wood, and I am a solitary girl here. The overspreading darkness, black like the *tamāla* tree, mantles over the earth – leave me now quickly to go, o lovely Kṛṣṇa! May Hari protect you, as He, hearing these words of the milkmaid embraces her. (SD, 3. 248)¹⁸⁷

The verse does not do justice to the transcendent reality of Vṛndāvana-līlā and to the supreme purity of all its participants, free from the tinges of mundane *kāma*. The meaning of the verse could pass as a valid description of Kṛṣṇa-līlā if the foundations of philosophy on which it rests would be proper. However, in this case, the theory which the verse is supposed to be illustrating (*anaucitya* and *rasābhāsa*) is faulty and offensive to the highest degree. The Gosvāmīs indignantly oppose such conclusions, and such minimizations of the purely transcendent pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who, during His descent, gives the most emotionally developed souls of the universe the chance to perfect their devotion in direct contact with the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Hero, and the only object of their devotion for many lifetimes.

gopyaḥ tapaḥ kim acarān yad amuṣya rūpaṁ
 lāvaṇya-sāram asamordhvam ananya-siddham
 dṛgbhiḥ pibanty anusavābhinavaṁ durāpam
 ekānta-dhāma yaśasaḥ śrīya aiśvarasya

What austerities must the *gopīs* have performed! With their eyes they always drink the nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa's form, which is the essence of loveliness and is not to be equaled or surpassed. That loveliness is the only abode of beauty, fame and opulence. It is self-perfect, ever fresh and extremely rare. (Bhāg. 10. 44. 14)

The Gosvāmīs saw it as their sacred task to prove in a most convincing way that the position of the *gopīs* surpasses the attainments, both spiritual and emotional, of any other group of spiritualists. This hierarchy of devotees is the topic of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, and the whole system of *bhakti-rasas* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī bows down to the highest expressions of love to the Lord exemplified by the *gopīs* of Vraja. Their love is described as without selfish motives, an almost subconscious drive to always please the Lord, while other forms of devotion may show tinges of interest in personal satisfaction. Classical examples would be the less pure variety of love (but still amazingly pure) of the Queens of

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 135. The verse is also included in the anthology *Padyāvalī* collected by Rūpa Gosvāmī, verse 251.

Dvārakā, or the sensuous attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa expressed by a hunchbacked lady in Mathurā.

3. 2. 12. Bhānudatta, 15th century
(Rasa-taraṅginī, Rasa-mañjarī)

Bhānudatta is credited with inventing the distinction between *laukika* and *alaukika rasas*:

The acceptance of *śānta* gave rise in later times to another controversial *rasa* called *māyā*. Just as there is the possibility of depicting the *śānta-rasa* with psychological, religious and metaphysical concepts like Jñāna, Bhakti, Śama, Dama, Saṁtuṣṭi, etc., there is also the possibility of depicting the *māyā-rasa* by showing the *jīvātmā* enmeshed in *saṁsāra* as a result of *mithyā-jñāna* or *avidyā*, with characters such as Kāma, Krodha and Lobha.¹⁸⁸ Even as *śānta* is the *rasa* of the state of *nivṛtti*, *māyā* is the *rasa* of the state of *pravṛtti*. In a philosophical drama, the *rasa* from which the hero escapes into the *śānta*, is *māyā*.¹⁸⁹

Bhānudatta writes in his *Rasa-taraṅginī*, *citta-vṛttiḥ dvidhā – pravṛttir nivṛttiś ca. nivṛtttau yathā śānta-rasaḥ, tathā pravṛtttau māyā-rasa iti pratibhāti*, “The mental states can be of two kinds, either detached or attached. Just as there is *śānta-rasa* in detachment, there is *māyā-rasa* in attachment.” (RT, ch. 7) But the proposition for a *māyā-rasa* has many uncomfortable implications. First of all, what enjoyment, and what aesthetic joy can there be in *māyā*? If we presume the *māyā-rasa* includes all of the mundane eight *rasas*, then for anyone to perceive *māyā* as such, as illusion, one needs to already be on the level of *śānta*, detachment. And in such a detached person, the mundane *rasas* will not produce aesthetic enjoyment in the heart anymore. If *śānta* is accepted as the final state of spiritual emancipation, then, next to *śānta*, any other *rasa* is not valid anymore.

¹⁸⁸ This refers to allegorical dramas where the characters are abstract qualities. Śrīla Kavi Kṛṣṇapūra also used that allegorical style in his *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*, which seems to have been modeled along the lines of the *Prabodha-candrodaya* of Keśava Miśra.

¹⁸⁹ V. Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas* (Chennai, 1976), p. 155.

3. 2. 13. *Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha, 17th century* (*Rasa-gaṅgādhara*)

Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha discusses eleven different *rasa*-theories in his poetic treatise, the *Rasa-gaṅgādhara*. He covers the views of Abhinavagupta, Mammaṭa, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa, Śaṅkuka, and a few others. His system is on the whole not very inventive, his number of *rasas* is nine, the eight of Bharata and *śānta*, and he seems to attribute the acceptance of *śānta* to Bharata himself. He almost includes *bhakti* within his system of *rasas*, but gives it up at the last moment, saying one should be submissive to the authority of Bharata Muni:

Now, why only these are treated as *rasas* – for it is indeed difficult to deny the existence of *bhakti-rasa* which has God as the *ālambana-vibhāva*, which is guessed from horripilation, tears etc., which is nourished by joy and the like and which is felt by devotees of God at the time of hearing the texts of the *Purāṇas* like the *Bhāgavata* etc. The permanent mood here (in *bhakti-rasa*) is devotion which is *rati* for God. It does not deserve to be included in the *śānta-rasa*, as love (*anurāga*) is disagreeable with detachment (*vairāgya*). It is said that as devotion being of the nature of love, having God and the like as its object, falls under the category of *bhāva*, so it is unworthy for attaining the state of *rasa* because early writers (like Mammaṭa) conclude, 'The love sentiment directed to God etc., and the transitory mood (*vyabhicāri-bhāva*) properly manifested are called *bhāva*, but when these are improperly manifested they become their mere appearance, *ābhāsa* (ie. *bhāvābhāsa* and *rasābhāsa*).'

It should not then be argued that, since love is the same (in both *rati* and *bhakti*), the *rati* for a woman should be treated as merely a *bhāva* [due to its being temporary in the ultimate sense], or that *bhakti* for God should be treated as a *sthāyi-bhāva* [due to its absolute permanence], worthy for ascending the rank of *rasa*. Because the words of the sages like Bharata have the ultimate freedom to ascertain the state of *bhāva* and *rasa*. Otherwise, why should not the love for a son be of the nature of a *sthāyi-bhāva*, or why should not aversion, grief etc. be treated as mere *bhāvas*? If this is admitted then the whole system is turned upside down. The counting of the *rasas* as being nine in number is controlled by the words of sage Bharata, so it is wise to follow the scripture.¹⁹⁰

But, an interesting twist happens: when enumerating the *vyabhicārīs*, which are also fixed in number according to Bharata, Paṇḍitarāja gives 'guru-deva-nṛpa-putrādi-viṣayā rati' (affection directed towards the teacher, God, king, or son) as the thirty-fourth *vyabhicāri-bhāva*. He explains that in this way, he has avoided admitting *vātsalya* separately as a *rasa*, which would be against Bharata's categorization. His final conclusion is that one should avoid whimsical changes that

¹⁹⁰ Chinmayi Chatterjee, *Rasagaṅgādhara of Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha with Marma-prakāśa of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa*, First Ānana, Vol. 1 (Calcutta 1992), pp. 115-6.

are not restrained by the words of the previous sages – but he himself was forced to add to Bharata as well.

Another point that is interesting in his analysis is, according to him, the incompatibility of *śānta* and *bhakti*, due to the first being characterized by *vairāgya* (renunciation), while the second is a positive feeling of affection (*rāga*, *anurāga*, *rati*). But this dichotomy clashes with reality: it is oftentimes the case that deep emotional relationships with the Supreme Lord effect a corresponding decrease in mundane affections, and vice versa.

This concludes the overview of theories of poetry and aesthetics. Two more authors admit *bhakti-rasa* within their works, Kavi Karṇapūra in his *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*, and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*. Their theories will be discussed fully in Chapter 6. Let us now turn to the refutation of the position of the theorists about the impossibility of admitting *bhakti* as a *rasa*. Since Rūpa Gosvāmī does not deal with these controversies, we turn to the works of his nephew and disciple, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

3. 3. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Defense of Bhakti-rasa

Jīva Gosvāmī (1513-1598), the prodigious nephew of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, their assistant and able successor, is credited with writing not less than 400, 000 Sanskrit verses. His works are mainly philosophical and theological, while his poetic creations like *Mādhava-mahotsava* and *Gopāla-campū* testify to his poetic abilities as well. He is the author of an original system of Sanskrit grammar, called the *Hari-nāmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa*, precious for its refreshing terminology based on *Vaiṣṇava* doctrines and the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

His most important work are the *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhās*, six successive treatises on all the important tenets of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* school. The first, the *Tattva-sandarbha*, is perhaps most well-known, discussing the basic epistemology of the *sampradāya*. The next treatise deals with the *Paramātmā* aspect of the Lord, while the next two, the *Bhagavat Sandarbha* and the *Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha*, cover the highest aspect of God, the personal Deity Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His expansions and His incarnations. The next two treatises, the *Bhakti* and *Prīti Sandarbhas*, are concerned with approaching the Supreme Lord through *bhakti* and *prīti*, which are more or less synonymous terms in the system of Jīva Gosvāmī.

Let us follow his line of reasoning in the *Prīti Sandarbha*¹⁹¹, *Anuccheda* 110.

¹⁹¹ In the absence of any massively printed editions and accurate translations that would be readily available, I was forced to use the electronic version of the *Prīti Sandarbha*, downloaded from the website www.gaudiyagranthamandira.org.

eṣā ca tat-prītir laukika-kāvya-vidāṁ raty-ādivat kāraṇa-kārya-sahāyair militvā rasāvasthāṁ āpnuvatī svayaṁ sthāyī bhāva ucyate. kāraṇādyās ca krameṇa vibhāvānubhāva-vyabhicāriṇa ucyante. tatra tasyā bhāvatvaṁ prīti-rūpatvād eva. sthāyitvaṁ ca –

viruddhair aviruddhair vā bhāvair vicchidyate na yaḥ
ātma-bhāvaṁ nayaty anyān sa sthāyī lavaṇākaraḥ
(Daśarūpaka 4. 34)

iti rasa-śāstrīya-lakṣaṇa-vyāpteh.

This *bhagavat-prīti* (divine affection) is itself a *sthāyī-bhāva*, and is similar in nature to mundane *rati* [although essentially very different]. According to the terminology of the knowers of mundane *kāvya*, this *prīti*, upon being augmented with causes, effects and accessories, reaches the stage of a *rasa*. Causes, effects and accessories are the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and the *vyabhicārīs*. Its emotional nature is clear from its form (it is an affection, *prīti*). Its being a *sthāyī* is also proven:

“That *bhāva*, which is not interrupted by either the contradictory or favorable emotions, and which brings other *bhāvas* into itself, is the *sthāyī*, which is like an ocean.” (Daśarūpaka, 4. 34) Thus, *prīti* falls within the definitions of mundane poetics.

anyeṣāṁ vibhāvatvādikāṁ ca tad-vibhāvanādi-guṇena darśayiṣyamāṇatvāt. tataḥ kāraṇādi-sphūrṭi-viśeṣa-vyakta-sphūrṭi-viśeṣā tan militā bhagavat-prītis tadīya-prītimaya-rasa ucyate. bhaktimayo raso bhakti-rasa iti ca. yathāhuḥ – bhāvā evābhisampannāḥ prayānti rasa-rūpatām iti.

It is admissible also because the *vibhāvas* of *bhagavat-prīti* can be presented in the same vein as the *vibhāvas* of all other emotions. When the special manifestation of causes, effects, and accessories, and the special manifestation of the *sthāyī* itself merge, then the *bhagavat-prīti* is called *tadīya-prīti-maya-rasa* (the *rasa* of affection for the Lord). It is also called *bhakti-maya-rasa*, or *bhakti-rasa*. As it is said, “In this way, being made complete (by the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhicārīs*), the *bhāvas* attain the condition of a *rasa*.”

yat tu prākṛta-rasikai rasa-sāmagrī-virahād bhaktau rasatvaṁ neṣṭam, tat khalu prākṛta-devādi-viṣayam eva sambhavet. sāmagrī hi rasatvāpattau trividhā. svarūpa-yogyatā, parikara-yogyatā, puruṣa-yogyatā ca. tatra laukike 'pi rase raty-ādeḥ sthāyinaḥ svarūpa-yogyatā. sthāyī-bhāva-rūpatvāt sukha-tādātmyāṅgikārād eva ca. bhagavat-prītau tu sthāyī-bhāvatvaṁ tad-vidhāśeṣa-sukha-taraṅgārṇava-brahma-sukhād adhikatamatvaṁ ca pratipāditam eva.

If the mundane aesthetes deny the status of *rasa* to *bhakti*, under the pretext that in the case of *bhakti*, there is no aggregate of ingredients necessary for the appearance of *rasa*, that can only be true in the case of mundane deities (the *devatās* of the mundane sphere). The completeness (*sāmagrī*) of any *bhāva* which is about to become a *rasa* has a threefold condition: (1) the suitable nature of its *svarūpa*, (2) the suitable nature of

its accompanying causes, and (3) the suitable nature of the persons involved. There is *yogyatā* (suitableness) of the different *sthāyīs* headed by *rati* even in the mundane *rasas*. *Bhagavat-prīti* as well possesses that suitability, due to its being a *sthāyi-bhāva*, and because it is nondifferent from its nature of happiness.

tathā tatra kāraṇādayas tat-parikarāś ca laukikatvād vibhāvanādiṣu svato 'kṣamāḥ. kintu sat-kavi-nibandha-cāturvyād evālaukikatvam āpannās tatra yogyā bhavanti. tatra tu te svata evālaukikādbhuta-rūpatvena darśitā darśanīyāś ca.

In themselves, the accompanying causes like *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhicārīs*, because of being this-worldly, may seem incapable of raising *prīti* to the status of *rasa*. But, by the expertise of poetic expression in the works of talented poets, these *vibhāvas* and so on attain an otherworldly nature and become capable of raising *prīti* to the stage of *rasa*. But they should also be understood as actually being otherworldly and wondrous in themselves [because of their connection with the Lord].

puruṣa-yogyatā ca śrī-prahlādādīnām iva tādṛśa-vāsanā. tām vinā ca laukika-kāvyenāpi tan-niṣpattiṁ na manyate. yathoktam – puṇyavantāḥ pramīṇvanti yogivad rasa-santatiṁ (Sāhitya-darpaṇa 3.2) iti. na jāyate tad-āsvādo vinā raty-ādi-vāsanām (Sāhitya-darpaṇa 3.8) iti ca.

The suitableness of persons involved is seen in Śrī Prahlāda and other devotees, who possess the *vāsanās* (of *bhagavat-prīti* which develop into a *rasa*). Without this latent *vāsanā*, and the suitability of the persons experiencing the *rasa*, the appearance of *rasa* is impossible even in the mundane aesthetic theory. As it is said,

“The virtuous apprehend the expanse of sentiment, as the ecstatic contemplators discern God in their vision.” (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 2)

“The *rasa* cannot appear if there is no latent *vāsanā* in the form of *sthāyīs* like *rati* in the consciousness of the experiencer.” (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 8)

laukika-rasasyotpattiḥ svarūpam āsvāda-prakāraś caivam evocyate. yathā –

*sattvodrekād akhaṇḍa-sva- prakāśānanda-cin-mayaḥ
vedyāntara-sparśa-śūnyo brahmāsvāda-sahodaraḥ
lokottara-camatkāra-prāṇaḥ kaiścit pramāṭṛbhiḥ
svākāravad abhinnaṭvenāyam āsvādyate rasaḥ
(Sāhitya-darpaṇa 3.2) iti*

atra tu aprākṛta-viśuddha-sattva-hetutvaṁ sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditam ity ādeḥ. darśitaṁ cāsya sattvasyāprākṛtatvaṁ bhagavat-sandarbhē. tathā brahmāsvādād apy adhikataṁ yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhṛtām (BhP 4.9.10) ity ādeḥ. nātyantikam vigaṇayanty api te prasādam (BhP 3.15.48) ity ādeś ca. tataś camatkāraś ca sutarām eva. vismāpanam svasya ca saubhagārddeḥ (BhP 3.2.12) ity ādeḥ.

Even the mundane appearance of *rasa* is declared to be a form of relish. As it is said,

"This sentiment, arising from the exaltation of purity, indivisible, self-illuminating and full of joy, free from contact with anything else to be known, is like a brother to the tasting of the Supreme Brahman by the sages.

This sentiment consists of otherworldly wonder and it is enjoyed by the competent relishers as inseparable from its effect." (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3.2)

Here we should understand the mental essence as the pure transcendent *viśuddha-sattva*, as described in the verse '*sattvaṁ viśuddham vasudeva-śabditam*' (Bhāg. 4. 3. 23). The transcendent nature of this *sattva*, mental essence, is evidenced in the *Bhagavat-sandarbha*. Its superiority over mere *brahmāsvāda* is stated in verses like Bhāg. 4. 9. 10:

*yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhṛtām tava pāda-padma-
dhyānād bhavaj-jana-kathā-śravaṇena vā syāt
sā brahmaṇi sva-mahimany api nātha mā bhūt
kiṁ tv antakāsi-lulitāt patatām vimānāt*

Dhruva said, "My Lord, the transcendental bliss derived from meditating upon Your lotus feet or hearing about Your glories from pure devotees is so unlimited that it is far beyond the stage of *brahmānanda*, wherein one thinks himself merged in the impersonal Brahman as one with the Supreme. Since *brahmānanda* is also defeated by the transcendental bliss derived from devotional service, then what to speak of the temporary blissfulness of elevating oneself to the heavenly planets, which is ended by the separating sword of time?"

Or in the verse Bhāg. 3. 15. 48:

*nātyantikam vigaṇayanty api te prasādam
kimv anyad arpita-bhayaṁ bhruva unnayais te
ye 'ṅga tvad-aṅghri-śaraṇā bhavataḥ kathāyāḥ
kīrtanya-tīrtha-yaśasaḥ kuśalā rasa-jñāḥ*

"Persons who are very expert and most intelligent in understanding the spiritual mellows engage in hearing narrations of the auspicious activities and pastimes of the Lord, which are worth chanting and worth hearing. Such persons do not care even for the highest material benediction, namely liberation, to say nothing of other less important benedictions which You could easily bestow simply raising Your eyebrows." Therefore, the wonder in *bhakti-rasa* is superior and greater than in mundane *kāvya*. This is also exemplified in Bhāg. 3. 2. 12:

*yan martya-līlāupayikam sva-yoga-
māyā-balam darśayatā gṛhitam
vismāpanam svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
param padam bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam*

"The Lord appeared in the mortal world by His internal potency, *yoga-māyā*. He came in His eternal form, which is just suitable for His pastimes. These pastimes were wonderful for everyone, even for those proud of their own opulence, including the

Lord Himself in His form as the Lord of *Vaikuṇṭha*. Thus His [Śrī Kṛṣṇa's] transcendental body is the ornament of all ornaments."

kiṁ cālaukika-rasa-vidāṁ prācīnānāṁ api matānusāreṇa sidhyaty asau rasaḥ. tatra sāmānyataḥ śrī-bhagavan-nāma-kaumudī-kārair darśitaḥ. tasya viśeṣatas tu śāntādiṣu pañcasu bhedeṣu vaktavyeṣu śrī-svāmī-caraṇair mallānāṁ aśanir (BhP 10.43.17)

This *prīti* is perfected into a *rasa* also according to the opinion of previous knowers of *alaukika-rasas*. In a general way, *bhakti-rasa* was admitted by the author of the *Bhagavan-nāma-kaumudī* (Lakṣmīdhara). In their variety, they have been articulated by the venerable Śrīdhara Svāmī in his commentary to Bhāg. 10. 43. 17.

*mallānāṁ aśanir nṛṇāṁ nara-varaḥ strīṇāṁ smaro mūrtimān
gopānāṁ sva-jano 'satāṁ kṣīti-bhujāṁ śāstā sva-pitroḥ śīśuḥ
mṛtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣāṁ tattvaṁ param yugināṁ
vṛṣṇīnāṁ para-devateti vidito raṅgaṁ gataḥ sāgrajaḥ*

"The various groups of people in the arena regarded Śrī Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord's universal form, the *yogīs* as the Absolute Truth and the *Vṛṣṇīs* as their supreme worshipable Deity."

ity ādau te pañcaiva darśitaḥ. strīṇāṁ śṛṅgāraḥ. samavayasāṁ gopānāṁ hāsyā-śabda-sūcita-narma-maya-sakhyā-sthāyī sakhyā-mayaḥ preyāṇ. tatas tan-mate gopānāṁ śrīdāmādināṁ ity evārthaḥ. pitror dayāpara-paryāya-vātsalya-sthāyī vatsalaḥ. yugināṁ jñāna-bhakti-mayaḥ śāntaḥ. vṛṣṇīnāṁ bhakti-maya iti. tathā sāmānya-prīti-maya-rasaś ca nṛṇāṁ darśitaḥ. tatrādbhutatva-nirdeśaś ca sarvasyaiva rasasya tat-prāṇatvāt śāntatvādi-vaiśiṣṭyābhāve tad eva nirdiṣṭam iti. yathāha dharma-dattaḥ –

*rase sārāś camatkāraḥ sarvatrāpy anubhūyate
tac-camatkāra-sāratve sarvatrāpy adbhuto rasaḥ
tasmād adbhutam evāha kṛtī nārāyaṇo rasam
(Sāhitya-darpaṇa 3. 2) iti*

In this and similar verses, the *rasas* are five. Of the women, there is *śṛṅgāra*. Of the cowherd boys contemporary with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *sthāyī* is friendship full of tenderness evidenced by the joking words, and the *sakhyā-maya-rasa* is called *preyāṇ*. That, in the opinion of Śrīdhara Svāmī, includes the cowherds like Śrīdāmā. Of His father, there is the *vatsala-rasa*, with the *sthāyī vātsalya*, characterized by a continuous desire for the well-being of the dependent. Of the *yogīs*, there is *śānta*, characterized by *jñāna* and *bhakti*. Of the *Vṛṣṇīs*, it is pure *bhakti-maya-rasa* in servitude. In this way, the general *prīti-maya-rasa* is visible in all these people. But the wonderful nature is actually common to all *rasas*, it is their life, as it were, and in their wondrous effect there is no

ultimate difference between the various *rasas* beginning with *śānta*. As Dharmadatta has said (quoted in *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 2 comm.)

“In each and every *rasa*, wonder is experienced. Therefore, the *adbhuta-rasa* is inherent in all of them. This is why the learned Nārāyaṇa has admitted only one ultimate *rasa*, *adbhuta*.”¹⁹²

ye tu mallādīnām raudrādi-rasās tatraiva svāmibhir aṅgīkṛtās te khalu prīti-virodhitvān nātrādṛtāḥ. tad etad alaūkika-rasavin-matam.

The *rasas* like *raudra* given in the above verse, which were enumerated by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, have not been accepted here due to their being contradictory to *prīti*. This is the opinion of those expert in discerning the *alaūkika-rasas*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī then briefly introduces the other mundane poetic theorists who have accepted *preyān* and *vātsalya* in their treatises, and quotes from Bhoja’s *Sarasvatī-kaṇṭhābharaṇa* (on *preyān*) and from the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* 3. 201 (on *vatsala*). He also mentions the work of a certain Sudeva, the *Rasa-vilāsa*, where *bhakti-rasa* is delineated as well. Then he turns to the ontological analysis of the *rasas* and their nature, and attempts to show the mundane *rasas* in their true light.

kim ca laukikasya ratyādeḥ sukha-rūpatvaṁ yathā-kathañcid eva vastu-vicāre duḥkha-paryavasāyitvāt. tad uktam svayaṁ bhagavatā sukhaṁ duḥkha-sukhātyayaḥ duḥkhaṁ kāma-sukhāpekṣā (Bhāg. 11. 19. 41) iti. tadīyaḥ śamo’pi śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddheḥ (Bhāg. 11. 19. 36) iti vadatā tenaivānādṛtaḥ. jugupsādīnām tu sukha-rūpatā laukikair api dveṣyā. tat-tan-nindā bhāgavata-rasa-ślāghā ca śrī-nārada-vākye –

*na yad vacaś citra-padam harer yaśo jagat-pavitraṁ pragṇīta karhicit
tad vāyasaṁ tīrtham uśanti mānasā na yatra haṁsā niramanty uśik-kṣayāḥ
tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo ’nkitāni yat śṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhaṇaḥ
(Bhāg. 1. 5. 10-11) iti*

Even though the mundane *bhāvas* headed by *rati* are believed to be of the nature of happiness, upon careful consideration they are not so, due to their termination in sorrow. The Lord Himself said in the Bhāg. 11. 19. 41, “Actual happiness is to transcend the dualities of so-called happiness and distress, and actual distress is to search for one’s own gratification.” The *śama* is also described by Him in Bhāg. 11. 19. 36, as the state of having the intelligence fixed in Him alone. In this way, the Lord does not accept the so-called joyful nature of the mundane *rasas*. An in fact, even the mundane *sthāyis* like *jugupsā* are averse to the notion of happiness, and that is admitted even by mundane theorists. The deprecation of all these mundane *bhāvas*, and a subsequent praise of the *bhāgavata-rasa* is found in the words of Śrī Nārada:

¹⁹² The learned Nārāyaṇa, Viśvanātha Kavirāja discloses in his *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, was the name of his great great grandfather.

"Those words which do not describe the glories of the Lord, who alone can sanctify the atmosphere of the whole universe, are considered by saintly persons to be like unto a place of pilgrimage for crows. Since the all-perfect persons are inhabitants of the transcendental abode, they do not derive any pleasure there.

On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest." (Bhāg. 1. 5. 10-11)

śrī-rukmiṇī-vākye 'pi –

tvak-śmaśru-roma-nakha-keśa-pinaddham antar
māṁsāsthi-rakta-kṛmi-viṭ-kapha-pitta-vātam
jīvac-chavaṁ bhajati kānta-matir vimūṭhā
yā te padābja-makarandam ajighratī strī
(Bhāg. 10. 60. 45) iti

Śrī Rukmiṇī also said,

"A woman who fails to relish the fragrance of the honey of Your lotus feet becomes totally befooled, and thus she accepts as her husband or lover a living corpse covered with skin, whiskers, nails, head-hair and body-hair and filled with flesh, bones, blood, parasites, feces, mucus, bile and air." (Bhāg. 10. 60. 45)

tasmāl laukikasyaiva vibhāvādeḥ rasa-janakatvaṁ na śraddheyam. taj-janakatve ca sarvatra bibhatsa-janakatvam eva sidhyati. śrī-bhāgavata-rasasya tu viṣayaṇam ārabhya mukta-paryante jane tadvad aho anindriye caitanya-śūnye 'pi vikāra-hetutvāt katham tatrāsambhāvanāpi syāt. yathoktaṁ – nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānāt (Bhāg. 10. 1. 4) ity ādi. aspandanam gatimatām pulakas tarūṇām (Bhāg. 10. 21. 19) iti. kṛṣṇam sametya labdhehā āsan śuṣkā nagā api (Bhāg. 10. 17. 15) iti. tad etad abhipretya śrī-bhagavat-prīty-ekavyāñjakasya śrī-bhāgavata-purāṇasya rasātmakatvaṁ śabdenaiva nirdiśati nigama-kalpa-taroḥ (Bhāg. 1. 1. 3) ity ādi

Therefore it is not very believable that the mundane vibhāvas and so on actually possess an ability to produce rasa. What they produce is ultimately only disgust. But the experience of the bhāgavata-rasa simply cannot be denied, it is possible in every entity, from the materialists up to those on the level of liberation, and, alas, even in the senseless entities with undeveloped consciousness, as is evidenced by the affected transformations in all of them. As it is said (Bhāg. 10. 1. 4),

nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād bhavauśadhāc chrotra-mano-'bhirāmāt
ka uttamaśloka-guṇānuvādāt pumān virajyeta vinā paśughnāt

"Glorification of the Supreme Person is relished by those no longer interested in the false, temporary glorification of this cosmic manifestation. Descriptions of the Lord are the right medicine for the conditioned soul undergoing repeated birth and death.

Therefore, who will cease hearing such glorification of the Lord except a butcher or one who is killing his own self?"

Or in the verse Bhāg. 10. 21. 19:

*gā gopakair anu-vanaṁ nayator udāra
veṇu-svanaiḥ kala-padais tanu-bhṛtsu sakhyāḥ
aspandanāṁ gati-matām pulakas tarūṇāṁ
niryoga-pāśa-kṛta-lakṣaṇayor vicitram*

"My dear friends, as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pass through the forest with Their cowherd friends, leading Their cows, They carry ropes to bind the cows' rear legs at the time of milking. When Lord Kṛṣṇa plays on His flute, the sweet music causes the moving living entities to become stunned and the nonmoving trees to tremble with ecstasy. These things are certainly very wonderful."

Or in the verse Bhāg. 10. 17. 15:

*yaśodā rohiṇī nando gopyo gopāś ca kaurava
kṛṣṇaṁ sametya labdhehā āsan śuṣkā nagā api*

"Having regained their vital functions, Yaśodā, Rohiṇī, Nanda and all the other cowherd women and men went up to Kṛṣṇa. O descendant of Kuru, even the dried-up trees came back to life."

The verse of the Bhāgavata 'nigama-kalpa-taroḥ' proves the state of *rasa* of this *bhagavat-prīti* which is manifested solely in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Bhāg. 1. 1. 3:

*nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalaṁ śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam
pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam muhur aho rasikā bhuvi-bhāvukāḥ*

"O expert and thoughtful men, relish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Therefore this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarean juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls."

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī goes on to explain that these *bhāvuka* devotees are the *rasa-jñas*, the experts in relishing the fruit of the tree of the Vedas which has fallen down to earth. That fruit itself is the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, its *rasa* is the *bhāgavata-rasa*, which by *śleṣa*, is the *rasa* connected to Bhagavān, or *bhagavat-prīti-maya-rasa*. Jīva Gosvāmī cites the *phala-śruti* of reading the *Bhāgavata* (Bhāg. 1. 7. 7):

*asyāṁ vai śrūyamāṇāyāṁ kṛṣṇe parama-pūruṣe
bhaktir utpadyate puṁsaḥ śoka-moha-bhayāpahā*

Simply by giving aural reception to this Vedic literature, the feeling for loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, sprouts up at once to extinguish the fire of lamentation, illusion and fearfulness.

Proving the source of *rasa* as Bhagavān Himself, he cites the famous dictum of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2. 7. 1), *raso vai saḥ, rasam hy evāyam labdhvānandī bhavati*. The *rasikas*, those who have the ability to taste this *rasa*, have qualified themselves either in the past or in the present life, and possess the attunement through the proper *saṁskāras*. At the end of this *pariccheda*, Jīva Gosvāmī adds that by proclaiming the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to be the ripe fruit of the Vedas, the fault of the lack of goal is avoided, and the *Bhāgavata*, among all Vedic goals, gives the highest one; it is the highest *śāstra* focused on the highest *puruṣārtha* (Love of God).

❧ Chapter Four ❧

Nava-rasa-militam vā kevalam vā ...

4. 1. The Number of Bhakti-rasas

The title of this chapter is taken from the opening verse of the *Bhakti-rasāyana* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, where he praises *bhakti-rasa* as either a unified single *rasa* (*kevalam*), or as consisting of nine *rasas* (*nava-rasa-militam*).

*nava-rasa-militam vā kevalam vā pum-artham
paramam iha mukunde bhakti-yogam vadanti
nirupama-sukha-saṁvid-rūpam asprṣṭa-duḥkham
tam aham akhila-tuṣṭyai śāstra-dṛṣṭyā vyanajmi*

For the pleasure of all, I herein explain *bhakti-yoga*, the path of devotion to Mukunda, according to the view of the *śāstras*. This *bhakti* is declared to be the highest goal of humanity. It consists of the nine different *rasas* or is an independent *rasa* in itself. Its form is incomparable happiness and complete cognizance, untouched by sorrow. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 1)

Before Rūpa Gosvāmī, *bhakti-rasa* was most often understood as a single, undifferentiated *rasa*. He was the one who introduced variety within the concept of *bhakti-rasa*, but it has to be borne in mind that his theory does not a priori accept the division of the general nine *rasas* of poetic theory (i. e. the eight *rasas* of Bharata, and *śānta*) but is a system of five *mukhya-bhakti-rasas* and seven *gauṇa-bhakti-rasas*, with an elaborate explanation and justification behind it.

Some scholars have been confusing the expression '*navadhā-bhakti*' with these nine *rasas* in *bhakti* – *navadhā-bhakti*, however, usually refers to the nine kinds of devotional engagement, enumerated by Prahlāda Mahārāja in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*¹⁹³ (7. 5. 23-24):

*śrī-prahrāda uvāca
śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
iti pumsārpitā viṣṇau bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addhā tan manye 'dhītam uttamam*

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words)—these nine processes are accepted as pure

¹⁹³ Or, it could refer to the enumeration of forms of *bhakti* by Lord Rāmacandra to the Śabarī, found in the *Rāma-carita-mānasa*, *Aranya-kāṇḍa*.

devotional service (*bhakti*). One who has dedicated his life to the service of Kṛṣṇa through these nine methods should be understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, an interesting conclusion on the topic of *bhakti-rasa* was made by Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha in his *Rasagaṅgādhara*. He tried to admit *bhakti* to the status of a *rasa*, but concluded that since Bharata Muni established only eight *rasas*, we cannot now overrule his authority and admit other *rasas* into the fold.

Rūpa Gosvāmī's simple solution to this kind of a dilemma is that *bhakti-rasa* is not a 'new *rasa*', as some have proposed, but any of the regular *rasas*, with a simple difference that these emotions are directed to God (more precisely, that they have God as their *ālambana-vibhāva*). Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore does not speak of a vague, undifferentiated '*bhakti-rasa*', but defines many kinds of them according to the specific nature of relationship to God, i.e. the *śānta-bhakti-rasa* (for the yogis), the *vātsalya-bhakti-rasa* (for Devakī, Nanda, Yaśodā), the *śṛṅgāra-bhakti-rasa* (for the *gopīs*) etc.

4. 1. 1. *Kaṁsa, Śiśupāla, the Gopīs and Nārada*

Earlier thinkers before Rūpa Gosvāmī often based their theories of *bhakti-rasa* on a famous series of verses from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (7. 1. 29-30) where it is mentioned that the *gopīs* of Vraja attained perfection through *kāma*, Kaṁsa through fear, and Śiśupāla through envy. These *bhakti-rasa* theorists would thus consider Kaṁsa a devotee of the Lord in *bhayānaka-bhakti-rasa*. Rūpa Gosvāmī is the first to stress the favorable nature of feeling towards the Lord as a prerequisite for *bhakti-rasa*.

Bopadeva in his *Muktāphala* attempted to create a model of different *bhakti-rasas*, according to the particular inclinations with which the variety of people approached the Supreme Lord.

sa navadhā bhaktaḥ.
bhakti-rasasyaiva hāsyā-śṛṅgāra-karuṇa-raudra-
bhayānaka-bībhatsa-śānta-adbhuta-vīra-rūpena anubhavāt.

The devotee is of nine kinds. By experience, *bhakti-rasa* has been divided into nine categories, *hāsyā*, *śṛṅgāra*, *karuṇa*, *raudra*, *bhayānaka*, *bībhatsa*, *śānta*, *adbhuta*, *vīra*.

The commentator of the *Muktāphala*, Hemādri, in his *Kaivalya-dīpikā*, makes a distinction between *vihitā-bhakti* and *avihitā* or *niṣiddhā-bhakti*, *bhakti* that is prescribed and *bhakti* that is not prescribed.

bhaktir vihitā avihitā ca. saiva param prakarṣa-rekhām āpannā
rasaḥ hāsyādaya eva hi bhagavati prayujyamānā

*tasmāt kenāpy upāyena manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet iti
bhakti-lakṣaṇākrāntatvāt bhakti-rasa-padavīm āsādayanti iti bhāvaḥ.*

Bhakti can be of the prescribed variety, or not prescribed. Such *bhakti*, when it reaches its highest expression in connection with the Lord, according to the dictum 'Therefore, one should fix one's mind on the Lord somehow or another', due to having closely approached the definition of *bhakti*, it attains the status of a *rasa*.

The *vihitā* variety is further divided into the *śuddhā* and *miśrā* categories, and the *miśrā-bhakti* category itself has several subdivisions, like *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*, *karma-miśrā-bhakti* and so on¹⁹⁴.

Hemādri postulates four kinds of *avihitā* or *niśiddhā-bhakti* in his scheme, according to the characters mentioned in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*: *kāma-jā*, *dveṣa-jā*, *bhaya-jā* and *sneha-jā*.

*kāmād dveṣād bhayāt snehād yathā bhaktyeśvare manaḥ
āveśya tad-agmaṁ hitvā bahavas tad-gatiṁ gatāḥ
gopyaḥ kāmād bhayāt kaṁso dveṣāc caidyādayo nṛpāḥ
sambandhād vṛṣṇayaḥ snehād yūyaṁ bhaktyā vayaṁ vibho*

Many persons have attained liberation simply by thinking of Lord Kṛṣṇa with great attention, either due to lusty desires, inimical feelings, fear, affection or devotion. This overwhelming absorption in Him purified them of their faults and they achieved the supreme destination.

My dear King Yudhiṣṭhira, the *gopīs* by their lusty desires, Kāṁsa by his fear, Śiśupāla and other kings by envy, the Yadus by their familial relationship with Kṛṣṇa, you Pāṇḍavas by your great affection for Kṛṣṇa, and we, the general devotees, by our devotional service, have obtained the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. (Bhāg. 7. 1. 30-31)

The distinction made by Hemādri between *avihitā* and *vihitā* kinds of *bhakti* is that the first one is full of feeling, even if the feeling is inimical, while in the other the feeling is proper, positive, but struggles to become emotionally overwhelming. Nārada humbly admits (Bhāg. 7. 1. 27):

*yathā vairānubandhena martyas tan-mayatām iyāt
na tathā bhakti-yogena iti me niścītā matiḥ
katamo 'pi na venāḥ syāt pañcānām puruṣaṁ prati
tasmāt kenāpy upāyena manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet*

Nārada Muni continued: By devotional service one cannot achieve such intense absorption in thought of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as one can through enmity toward Him. That is my opinion. (Bhāg. 7. 1. 27)

¹⁹⁴ The full categorization is presented in Appendix 3.

Somehow or other, one must consider the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa very seriously. Then, by one of the five different processes mentioned above, one can attain perfection. Atheists like King Vena, however, being unable to think of Kṛṣṇa's form in any of these five ways, cannot attain salvation. Therefore, one must somehow think of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whether in a friendly way or inimically. (Bhāg. 7. 1. 32)

A similar statement about the varieties of emotional content in different devotees, who achieve corresponding perfections in these emotions, is found in the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, a scripture very much valued in the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* for its concise treatment of many tenets of *Vaiṣṇavism*.

yam krodha-kāma-sahaja-praṇayādi-bhīti-
vātsalya-moha-guru-gaurava-sevya-bhāvaiḥ
sañcintya tasya sadṛśīm tanum āpur ete
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, the meditators of whom, by meditating upon Him under the sway of wrath, amorous passion, natural friendly love, fear, parental affection, delusion, reverence and willing service, attain to bodily forms befitting the nature of their contemplation. (BS, 5. 55)

The *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* has established its own variation of *vihitā* and *avihitā-bhakti*, and the distinction between the two promises to be more 'user-friendly' to the devotees applying it in their lives. At the outset, all inimical feelings toward God are denied the status of a valid relationship with Him, or the status of a *rasa*. Then, the possible *rasas* are divided into primary and secondary ones. And, for advancing in the development of one's dormant relationship with the Lord in one of the primary five *rasas*, the concept of *vaidhī-bhakti* (regulated devotional service), and *rāgānugā-bhakti* (service in spontaneous devotion) are introduced. Mapping one's progress becomes easy, and the goal is clear: approximating the natural, deep emotional capacity of the dear associates of the Lord. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī comments on the abovementioned verse of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*¹⁹⁵:

Devotion is of two kinds, viz., (1) of the nature of deference to regulation and (2) constituted of natural feeling. *Bhakti* is roused by following with a tinge of faith in the rule of the *śāstras* and instruction of the preceptors. Such *bhakti* is of the nature of loyalty to the scriptural regulations. It continues to be operative as long as the corresponding natural feeling is not roused. If a person loves Kṛṣṇa out of natural tendency, there is the principle of *rāga*, which is no other than a strong desire to serve, which turns into *bhāva* or substantive feeling. When the substantive feeling is aroused the devotee becomes an object of mercy of Kṛṣṇa. It takes much time to attain this

¹⁹⁵ I use the electronic version from the Bhaktivedanta Vedabase 2003. 1, and so cannot supply page numbers for the quote. The commentary to the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, verse 5. 55.

stage. Devotion which is of the nature of feeling is superior to that connected with scriptural regulation, it soon attains to the realized state and is attractive to Kṛṣṇa. Its various aspects are described in this śloka. *Śānta-bhāva*, full of reverence to superior, *dāsyā-bhāva*, full of service for carrying out the commands of the object of worship, *sakhyā-bhāva* or natural friendly love, *vātsalyā-bhāva* or parental affection and *madhura-bhāva* or amorous love, are all included in the category of devotion of the nature of instinctive attachment. But anger, fear and delusion, though they are of the nature of instinctive impulse, are not devotion in the strict sense of the term, because they are not friendly but hostile to the object. Anger is found in asuras like Śiśupāla, fear in Kāṁsa, and delusion in the *paṇḍitas* of the pantheistic school. They have the feelings of anger, fear and instinctive impulse marked by complete self-forgetful identification with the nondifferentiated Brahman. But as there is no friendly feeling towards the object of devotion there is no *bhakti*. Again among the feelings of *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalyā* and *madhura* – *śānta*, though indifferent and dormant in *rāga*, is still reckoned as *bhakti* on account of its being a little friendly. There is an immense volume of *rāga* in the other four varieties of emotion. By the promise of *Gītā* (4. 11), *ye yathā mām prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham* ("I serve one according to his submission"), those, who allow themselves to be actuated by the sentiments of fear, anger and delusion, attain to *sāyujya-mukti* (merging in the Absolute). The *śāntas* obtain bodily forms with aptitude for addiction to Brahman and Paramātmā. The *dāsyā* and *sakhyā* classes of worshipers attain bodily forms characterized by masculine or feminine disposition according to their respective grades of eligibility. The *vātsalyā* class of worshipers get bodily forms befitting fatherly and motherly sentiments. The amorous lovers of Kṛṣṇa attain the pure forms of *gopīs* (spiritual milkmaids of Vraja).

4. 1. 2. *The Kāma of the Gopīs*

Hemādri, in his category of *avihitā-bhakti*, groups together two kinds of animosity (*bhaya* and *dveṣa*), and two kinds of overwhelming attraction, conjugal and friendly (*kāma* and *sneha*). While the first three varieties of *avihitā-bhakti* may be said to be discouraged due to their inimical or undesirable nature for the spiritualist, that is hardly so at least in the case of the *sneha-jā* variety. And even the *kāma* of the *gopīs* is far from a mere desire to enjoy the Lord, as the Gosvāmīs amply prove through their writings. All in all, the theory of the two predecessors of Rūpa Gosvāmī, Bopadeva and Hemādri, seems inadequate. It is unappreciative of the supreme reality of the spiritual world where at least the positive varieties of these feelings exist eternally and are hallowed as the perfectional state, rather than a stain to be removed. The idea of *avihitā-bhakti*, while seeking to congratulate the devotees involved for their high level of emotional absorption, nevertheless seems somewhat stiff, attempting to make everyone conform to a quietistic kind of regulated, supposedly sinless devotion to the Lord. The *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* operate with a different frame, their reference is Goloka, inhabited by the expansions of *hlādinī*-

śakti of the Supreme Lord, the superexcellent gopīs, who descend along with the Lord at the time of His pastimes on earth to melt the inimical nature of the jīvas in this world. As far as the apparent kāma of the gopīs is concerned, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa itself explicitly defends their spiritual position (10. 33. 39):

*vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

Anyone who faithfully hears or describes the Lord's playful affairs with the young gopīs of Vṛndāvana will attain the Lord's pure devotional service (*bhaktiṁ parāṁ*). Thus he will quickly become sober and conquer lust, the disease of the heart.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, in his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, summarizes the stance of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya on the issue of mere mundane lust versus *premā*, exemplified by the gopīs of Vraja:

*gopī-gaṇera premera 'rūḍha-bhāva' nāma
viśuddha nirmala prema, kabhu nahe kāma
premaiva gopa-rāmānām kāma ity agamat prathām
ity uddhavādayo 'py etaṁ vāñchanti bhagavat-priyāḥ
kāma, prema,—donhākāra vibhinna lakṣaṇa
lauha āra hema yaiche svarūpe vilakṣaṇa
ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā—tāre bali 'kāma'
kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare 'prema' nāma
kāmera tātṭharya—nija-sambhoga kevala
kṛṣṇa-sukha-tātṭharya-mātra prema ta' prabala*

The love of the gopīs is called *rūḍha-bhāva*. It is pure and spotless. It is not at any time lust.

The pure love of the gopīs has become celebrated by the name 'lust.' The dear devotees of the Lord, headed by Śrī Uddhava, desire to taste that love.¹⁹⁶

Lust and love have different characteristics, just as iron and gold have different natures.

The desire to gratify one's own senses is *kāma* [lust], but the desire to please the senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa is *prema* [love].

The object of lust is only the enjoyment of one's own senses. But love, *premā*, caters to the enjoyment of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and thus it is very powerful. (CC, Ādi, 4. 162-6)

*ihāke kahiye kṛṣṇe dṛḍha anurāga
svaccha dhautā-vastre yaiche nāhi kona dāga
ataeva kāma-preme bahuta antara*

¹⁹⁶ This is a citation from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1. 2. 285.

*kāma—andha-tamaḥ, prema—nirmala bhāskara
 ataeva goṇī-gaṇera nāhi kāma-gandha
 kṛṣṇa-sukha lāgi mātṛa, kṛṣṇa se sambandha
 ātma-sukha-duḥkhe goṇīra nāhika vicāra
 kṛṣṇa-sukha-hetu ceṣṭā mano-vyavahāra
 kṛṣṇa lāgi' āra saba kare parityāga
 kṛṣṇa-sukha-hetu kare śuddha anurāga*

That is called firm attachment to Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is spotlessly pure, like a clean cloth that has no stain.

Therefore lust and love are quite different. Lust is like dense darkness, but love is like the bright sun.

Thus there is not the slightest taint of lust in the gopīs' love. Their relationship with Kṛṣṇa is only for the sake of His enjoyment.

The gopīs do not care for their own pleasures or pains. All their physical and mental activities are directed toward offering enjoyment to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

They renounced everything for Kṛṣṇa. They have pure attachment to giving Kṛṣṇa pleasure. (CC, Ādi, 170-72, 174-5)

*tān sabāra nāhi nija-sukha-anurodha
 tathāpi bādhaye sukha, paḍila virodha
 e virodhera eka mātṛa dekhi samādhāna
 gopikāra sukha kṛṣṇa-sukhe paryavasāna
 prīti-viṣayānande tad-āśrayānanda
 tāñhā nāhi nija-sukha-vāñchāra sambandha
 nirupādhi prema yāñhā, tāñhā ei rīti
 prīti-viṣaya-sukhe āśrayera prīti
 nija-premānande kṛṣṇa-sevānanda bādhe
 se ānandera prati bhaktera haya mahā-krodhe
 kāma-gandha-hīna svābhāvika goṇī-prema
 nirmala, ujjala, śuddha yena dagdha hema*

The gopīs have no inclination for their own enjoyment, and yet their joy increases. That is indeed a contradiction.

For this contradiction I see only one solution: the joy of the gopīs lies in the joy of their beloved Kṛṣṇa.

The happiness of the abode of love (prīti-āśraya) is in the happiness of the object of that love (prīti-viṣaya). This is not a relationship of desire for personal gratification.

Whenever there is unselfish love, that is its style. The reservoir of love derives pleasure when the lovable object is pleased. When the pleasure of love interferes with the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the devotee becomes angry toward such ecstasy.

The natural love of the gopīs is devoid of any trace of lust. It is faultless, bright and pure, like molten gold. (CC, Ādi, 4. 188-89, 99-201, 209)

To conclude, seeing the *gopīs*' love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa as having tinges of mundane desire is always problematic, and the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs keep stressing the point. Nārada, in his discussion with Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, seems to have been relating to the '*kāma*' of the *gopīs* not at all in a derogatory way, and this is how it should be understood. Externally, it may seem to be like *kāma*, but it is much deeper and higher than any mundane affection, as demonstrated in the lives of the *gopīs* who sacrificed any ordinary relationship in the fire of their love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In relating such apparently sensual love too closely with our mundane experiences of romance, their amazing quality of self-surrender and one-pointed attention to Kṛṣṇa's pleasure is overshadowed, and we lose sight of the ideal we should be striving towards. The outward situation of the *gopīs* and its apparent sensuousness should not confuse us, the message of their *līlā* is their level of spiritual absorption in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, amply documented in the inspired works of the Gosvāmīs. The topic will also be covered in the chapter on Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the *aprākṛta-nāyaka*, above mundane types of heroes in poetic works. Let us first turn to the categorization of spiritual emotions in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

4. 2. The Rasas of the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

4. 2. 1. The Five Primary Bhakti-rasas

The southern, *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga*, enumerates the five components of the experience of *rasa*, namely the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *sāttvikas*, *vyabhicārīs* and the *sthāyīs*. The division into separate *rasas* is described in the fifth *laharī* dealing with the *sthāyīs*.

aviruddhān viruddhānś ca bhāvān yo vaśatām nayet
 su-rājeva virājeta sa sthāyī bhāva ucyate
 sthāyī bhāvo 'tra sa proktaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-viṣayā ratih
 mukhyā gauṇī ca sā dvedhā rasa-jñaiḥ parikīrtitā

That emotion which dominates all compatible and incompatible emotions and shines forth like the best of all kings is called a foundational emotion. It is declared to be that love (*rati*) which takes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as its object. The knowers of *rasa* say that it is of two types, *mukhyā* (primary) and *gauṇī* (secondary). (BRS, 2. 5. 1-2)

Mukhyā-rati (love of God in any of the primary relationships) is described in terms similar to the definition of *bhāva* in 1. 3. 1:

śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā ratir mukhyeti kīrtitā
 mukhyāpi dvividhā svārthā parārthā ceti kīrtiyate

Love which is a special form of the *śuddha-sattva* (composed of the *hlādinī* and *saṁvit śaktis*), is called primary. It is further divided into two modes: self-supporting (*svārthā*) and supportive of another (*parārthā*). (BRS, 2. 5. 3)

The division of *ratis* into *mukhya* and *gauṇa* is effected through the distinction of *svārthā* and *parārthā-rati*. The definitions of both are given below:

*aviruddhaiḥ sphuṭam bhāvaiḥ puṣṇāty ātmānam eva yā
viruddhair duḥśaka-glāniḥ sā svārthā kathitā ratiḥ
aviruddham viruddham ca saṅkucantī svayaṁ ratiḥ
yā bhāvam anuḡṛhṇāti sā parārthā nigadyate*

That primary love which nourishes itself with compatible emotions, and which cannot be diminished by the incompatible emotions, is called 'self-supporting love' (*svārthā-mukhyā-rati*).

That primary love which, in the face of compatible and incompatible emotions, is prone to contracting itself and nourishing them instead, is called 'love supportive of another' (*parārthā-mukhyā-rati*). (BRS, 2. 5. 4-5)

When the primary love contracts itself, it gives place to secondary loves to assume superiority. These secondary loves are seven, while the primary loves are five:

*śuddha prītiḥ tathā sakhyāṁ vātsalyāṁ priyatety asau
sva-parārthyaiva sā mukhyā punaḥ pañca-vidhā bhavet*

A primary love in these two divisions (the *svārthā* and *parārthā*) has five varieties: *śuddha*, *prīti* (or *dāsyā*), *sakhyā* (or *preyān*), *vatsala* (or *vātsalya*) and *priyatā* (or *madhura*, or *mādhurya*).

The first one of these (here called *śuddha*) is generally understood as the *śānta*, and Rūpa Gosvāmī himself elsewhere describes it as *śānta-rati*. It is imperative to have a clear understanding of these five categories, since the terminology is partly borrowed from the standard poetic theory where some of the terms may have a slightly different meaning. For example, let us inspect the work of Sushil Kumar De, *Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic*:

A new turn was given to the theory by Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which brings religious ideas to bear upon the general theme of *rasa*. It attempts to deal with *rasa* in terms of the *Vaiṣṇava* idea of *ujjvala*- or *madhura-rasa*, by which is meant the *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the term *ujjvala* being apparently suggested by Bharata's description of the *rasa*. The *madhura-rasa*, however, is represented not in its secular aspect but primarily as a phase of *bhakti-rasa* (*madhurākhyo bhakti-rasaḥ*); for the *Vaiṣṇava* theology admits five *rasas* as forming roughly the five degrees or aspects of the realization of *bhakti* (faith): *śānta* (tranquility), *dāsyā* (also called *prīti*, servitude or humility), *sakhyā* (also called

preyas, friendship or equality), *vātsalya* (parental affection) and *mādhurya* (sweetness). The last, also called the *ujjala-rasa*, being the principal, is termed *bhakti-rasa-rāṭ*.¹⁹⁷

In his editorial notes, Gerow seeks to explain these terms but misses most of the meanings:

Of these the first (*śānta*) is the much discussed ninth *rasa* of the canonical schools and *mādhurya* (sweetness) is a *guṇa*; *preyas* is also the name of an *alaṅkāra* (Daṇḍī 2. 275), and *prīti* is a definand of *rasavad-alaṅkāra*, one of the most controversial figures (Daṇḍī 2. 281, DhvĀ 2.5).

Needless to say, it is not enough to attempt to clarify Rūpa Gosvāmī's theory by opening a few classical books on aesthetic theory, since Rūpa Gosvāmī has thoroughly adjusted the theory and its elements to the world of *bhagavad-bhakti*. All of these detailed distinctions have already been made in the previous chapter, let us now study the definitions of the five primary *rasas* as given personally by Rūpa Gosvāmī. Their outlines begin in the *sthāyī-bhāva-laharī* of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga*, and continue through the five separate *laharīs* of the *paścima-vibhāga*, each dealing with one of the primary *rasas*. After the general remarks reproduced below, each *rasa* will be treated separately in its own subsection.

vaiśiṣṭyaṁ pātra-vaiśiṣṭyād ratir eṣopagacchati
yathārkaḥ pratibimbātmā sphaṭikādiṣu vastuṣu

The particular form that love takes is determined by the specific nature of the individual devotee, just as a reflected image of the sun is determined by the nature of the jewel through which it is being reflected. (BRS, 2. 5. 7)

The five primary *bhakti-rasas* in the system of Rūpa Gosvāmī are not so much like emotions presented in a dramatic or poetic work, but are closer to 'character frames' of ideal devotees of God¹⁹⁸, to be mentally imitated and internalized by others who desire the same closeness and intimacy in relation to the Lord.

The five primary *rasas* ascend hierarchically towards the most intimate, *madhura-rasa*¹⁹⁹. *Śānta* is the lowest grade in the hierarchy, without any distinct *mamatā*

¹⁹⁷ Sushil Kumar De, *Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetic* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 60-1.

¹⁹⁸ David Haberman in his *Acting as a Way of Salvation* (Delhi 2001), introduces the term 'paradigmatic individual' to denote the exemplary, so-called mythical personalities that embody the characteristics of certain *bhakti-rasas*. (p. 8)

¹⁹⁹ This ascension can be understood either in the personal development of a particular individual who can theoretically progress from the lower rungs of the *bhakti-rasa* ladder up to higher perfections of possessiveness and emotional susceptibility, or, more often, one is immediately attracted to a particular relationship, meaning that the hierarchy given is more or less technical. Perfection exists in every *rasa*, and absolutely speaking they are all perfect.

(sense of possessiveness). All the other four outdo each other in degrees of possessiveness.

*prāyaḥ śama-pradhānānām mamatā-gandha-varjitā
paramātmataḥ kṛṣṇe jātā śānta-ratir matā*

The *rati* which arises in persons with a predominance of *śama* (tranquility) and which is devoid of even a trace of possessiveness for the Lord, but which produces attraction towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His form of Paramātmā, is called *śānta-rati*. (BRS, 2. 5. 18)

*atha bheda-trayī hṛdyā rateḥ prīty-ādir īryate
gāḍhānukūlatotpannā mamatvena sadāśritā
kṛṣṇa-bhakteṣv anugrāhya- sakhi-pūjyeṣv anukramāt
tri-vidheṣu trayī prītiḥ sakhyam vatsalatety asau*

The next three types of *rati* – *prīti*, *sakhya* and *vatsala* – are pleasing to the heart. They arise from deep positive affection for the Lord, and are always endowed with possessiveness (*mamatā*). When such *rati* is found in three types of devotees – recipients of mercy, friends and elders – it becomes *prīti-rati*, *sakhya-rati* and *vatsala-rati*. (BRS, 2. 5. 22-23)

*svasmād bhavanti ye nyūnas te 'nugrāhyā harer matāḥ
ārādhyatvātmikā teṣāṃ ratir prītir itīritā
tatrāsakti-kṛd anyatra prīti-saṁhāriṇī hy asau*

When persons identify themselves as inferior to the Lord, they are called the recipients of mercy (*anugrāhyā*). Their love characterized by respect, in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa is perceived as worthy of worship, is called *prīti*. This *prīti-rati* produces attachment for the object of worship, and destroys affection for other objects. (BRS, 2. 5. 27-28)²⁰⁰

*ye syus tulyā mukundasya te sakhāyaḥ satām matāḥ
sāmyād viśrambha-rūpaiṣāṃ ratiḥ sakhyam ihocyate
parihāsa-prahāsādi- kāriṇīyam ayantraṇā*

Those who identify themselves as equal to Mukunda are called *sakhas* or friends. Their love, with familiarity arising from the sense of equality, is called *sakhya-rati*. In this *rati*, there is loud laughing, joking and no sense of restraint. (BRS, 2. 5. 30)

*guravo ye harer asya te pūjyā iti viśrutāḥ
anugraha-mayī teṣāṃ ratir vātsalyam ucyate
idaṁ lālana-bhavyāśīṣ cibuka-sparsanādi-kṛt*

²⁰⁰ Jīva Gosvāmī comments that when there is attachment to other objects within *prīti-rati*, it should be understood that these objects are ultimately always related to Kṛṣṇa.

Those persons whose *rati* identifies them as superiors to the Lord are known as *pūjya*, worthy of respect or elders. Their love, which consists of kindness to the Lord, is called *vātsalya* or *vatsala*. In such love, there is caressing, blessing Him and touching His chin. (BRS, 2. 5. 33)

mitho harer mṛgākṣyāś ca sambhogasyādi-kāraṇam
madhurāpara-paryāyā priyatākhyoditā ratiḥ
asyāṁ kaṭākṣa-bhrū-kṣepa- priya-vāṇī-smitādayaḥ

That *rati* found in the doe-eyed ladies, which is the root cause of the eight types of enjoyment in mutual association of the ladies and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called *priyatā-rati*. It is also called *madhura-rati*. In this love, there are side-long glances, moving the eyebrows, affectionate words, slight smiles and so on. (BRS, 2. 5. 36)

The detailed treatment of the separate *rasas* begins in the *paścima-vibhāga* with the primary five, and continues in the last, the *uttara-vibhāga*, with the secondary seven *bhakti-rasas*. Each of them will now be treated separately, listing the peculiarities and definitions for each of them.

4. 2. 2. *Śānta-bhakti-rasa or Śuddha-bhakti-rasa*

In the first *laharī* of the *paścima-vibhāga*, Rūpa Gosvāmī discusses *śānta-rasa* in a detailed manner.

vakṣyamāṇair vibhāvādyaiḥ śaminām svādyatām gataḥ
sthāyī śānti-ratir dhīraiḥ śānta-bhakti-rasaḥ smṛtaḥ

If the *sthāyi-bhāva* called *śānti-rati* mixes with the elements headed by *vibhāvas* that are about to be described, and is relished by persons possessing *śama*, the wise call it *śānta-bhakti-rasa*.

The *ālambana-vibhāva* in *śānta-rasa* is the Lord in His Paramātmā feature, the eternal form of bliss and knowledge, full of extraordinary qualities, and all-pervasive. He attracts to Himself two kinds of *śānta-bhaktas*, the *ātmārāmas* who have received His mercy or the mercy of His devotees, and the *tapasvīs* who have developed firm faith in the path of *bhakti*. Such *tapasvīs* qualify for the inclusion within the *śānta-rati* because their desire for liberation is subordinate to their desire for *bhakti* (in other words, they desire liberation, but only so that it would facilitate pure *bhakti*).

The *uddīpana-vibhāvas* which encourage the appearance of *śānta-rasa* are hearing the *Upaniṣads*, living in a solitary place, seeing the river Gaṅgā or other holy places, contemplating about the Absolute Truth and about the effect of time, visualizing the

universal form of the Lord, and associating with *jñāna-miśra-bhaktas*. A similar kind of *uddipana-vibhāvas* are those which the *śānta-bhaktas* share with the *bhaktas* of the next category, *prīta-rasa*: smelling the Tulasī leaves offered to the lotus feet of the Lord, or hearing the sound of the Lord's conch.

The *anubhāvas* typical of *śānta-rasa* are staring at the tip of the nose, behaving like a renunciate, absence of hatred even towards the enemies of the Lord, lack of intense attachment to the devotees of the Lord, a great regard for perfection and liberation, lack of false ego and silence. Here again, the *śānta* category overlaps with the *prīta* in some of the *anubhāvas*, like ecstatic yawning, stretching the body, instructing the devotees, offering obeisances to the Lord, and reciting praises.

The *sāttvikas* are possible, but not their most affected varieties like fainting.

In *śānta-rasa*, particular *vyabhicārīs* like *nirveda*, *dhṛti*, *harṣa*, *mati*, *smṛti*, *viṣāda* and so on appear. For example, *nirveda*:

*asmin sukha-ghana-mūrtau paramātmāni vṛṣṇi-pattane sphurati
ātmārāmatayā me vṛthā gato bata ciraṁ kālāḥ*

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Paramātmā, whose form is concentrated bliss, now resides in the city of Dvārakā, I am so unfortunate! I have wasted so much time imagining I am an *ātmārāma*! (BRS, 3. 1. 34)

Rūpa Gosvāmī of course urges us on to higher realms of attachment to the Lord, and presents examples of those who have upgraded their relationship²⁰¹. The following is a verse by Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura:

*advaita-vīthi-pathikair upāsyāḥ svānanda-simhāsana-labdha-dikṣāḥ
śaṭhena kenāpi vayaṁ haṭhena dāsi-kṛtā gopa-vadhū-viṭena*

Although we were respected by the followers of the path of *advaita* and were worshipped by them on the throne of realizing the bliss of Brahman, we were forcibly made into female servants by one particular crafty boyfriend of the cowherd ladies. (BRS, 3. 1. 44)

At the end of the *śānta-rasa-laharī*, Rūpa Gosvāmī touches upon the previous speculations about the nature of *śānta-rasa* and its admissibility within the system of *rasas*: "Because of the lack of an object of attention in the state of *śama*, the experts in poetics do not consider *śānta* as a *rasa*." But he argues that in his own system, the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *śānta* is *śānta-rati* which has the Lord as its object, and so the argument of the poetic theorists is not valid here. He quotes from the *Bhāgavata*

²⁰¹ His comment is: If Śrī Kṛṣṇa is merciful to someone previously fixed in *jñāna*, that *śānta-bhakta* becomes elevated in *rati* to Kṛṣṇa. (BRS, 3. 1. 43) As in the case of Śukadeva, the *jñāna-saṁskāras* slacken by the mercy of the Lord, and the devotee attains the perfection of bliss in *bhakti-rasa*. (BRS, 3. 1. 45)

Purāṇa (11. 19. 36), the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, *śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddheḥ*, “Śama is having the intelligence fixed in Me.” Such steadiness of intelligence is only possible for those who possess *śānta-rati*, a neutral, elementary kind of affection for the Lord.

He adds an enlightened comment to the argumentations about the *sthāyī* of *śānta-rasa*: “The previous scholars have described many types of *śānta-rasa*, some favoring *dhṛti* and some *nirveda* as its *sthāyī-bhāva*. If *nirveda* arises from knowledge of the Absolute Truth, then it certainly can be admitted as a *sthāyī-bhāva* directed at the Lord. But *nirveda* born of mere deprivation of anything desirable, or confrontation with anything undesirable, is only a common *vyabhicāri-bhāva*.”

4. 2. 3. *Prīti-bhakti-rasa* or *Dāsyā-bhakti-rasa*

At the beginning of the *laharī* dealing with *prīti-bhakti-rasa*, Rūpa Gosvāmī clears the confusion about the terminology and mentions the predecessors who have written about it. Śrīdhara Svāmī, in describing the *rasas* of the audience in the wrestling arena of king Kāṁsa²⁰², calls this kind of affection *saprema-bhakti*, ‘*bhakti* filled with affection’. Lakṣmīdhara, the author of the *Nāma-kaumudī*, proposed *rati* as its *sthāyī-bhāva*. Sudeva and other aesthetic theorists, however, have called it only a special form of *śānta*.

*ātmocitair vibhāvādyaiḥ prītir āsvādanīyatām
nītā cetasi bhaktānām prīti-bhakti-raso bhavet*

When *prīti* or adoration achieves a pleasurable nature by the the composite effect of the favorable *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *vyabhicārīs* and so on in the hearts of the devotees, it is called *prīti-bhakti-rasa*. (BRS, 3. 2. 3)

It has two major divisions, *sambhrama-prīti* and *gaurava-prīti*. The first occurs in the servants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the second in His dependent relations, like His son Pradyumna or sister Subhadrā. For both *sambhrama-prīti*, polite servitude, and *gaurava-prīti*, relational servitude, the *viṣayāmbana-vibhāva* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His attendants in Gokula are attracted to His two-armed form, while His servants residing elsewhere may also be drawn to His four-armed form.

Rūpa Gosvāmī makes a detailed study of the servants of the Lord in *sambhrama-prīti*, dividing them into four categories. One of the categories is the demigods who serve the Lord in their respective administrative positions. The second are the devotees who have taken shelter of the Lord: the surrendered souls, the previous *jñānīs* who have become attracted to devotional service, or the general devotees

²⁰² In his commentary to Bhāg. 10. 43. 17.

steady in their serving attitude towards the Lord. The next category covers the associates of the Lord and members of His retinue in Dvārakā, of whom Uddhava is the brightest example. The fourth category are the personal attendants of the Lord in either Dvārakā or Vraja.

All of these different devotees can be either *nitya-siddhas*, *sādhana-siddhas*, or *sādhakas*. For the *sādhakas*, the path of attaining *bhāva* is by *sādhana* or by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the *nitya-siddhas*, the *sthāyi-bhāva* is already present as a latent impression within their minds, and the appearance of the other aesthetic and devotional components makes the *prīti-rasa* blossom in their heart. It can increase in intensity to states called *prema*, *sneha*, *rāga* and *praṇaya*. The highest of these states are possible only in exceptional devotees like Uddhava.

On seeing Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava offered Him a gift in the form of a great river of tears. When he began to recite prayers using attractive words and a sweet tone, his voice choked and the words of the *stotra* became mumbled. His body erupted in goose bumps resembling a blossoming *kadamba* tree. Even though completely stunned, he achieved the position of being the most blessed among the surrendered devotees. (BRS, 3. 2. 86)

Unique *uddīpana-vibhāvas* in *prīti-rasa*, in both of its kinds, are attaining Kṛṣṇa's mercy, obtaining the dust of His lotus feet, and relishing His food remnants. Other, regular *uddīpanas* are the sound of His flute and horn, His kind glance, hearing about His excellent virtues, the lotus, the new rainclouds, and the fragrance of His body.

The *anubhāvas* particular for this relationship are: being completely involved in serving the Lord to the utmost of one's capacity, seeking friendship with other servants never tinged with envy, and remaining steady in one's submissive devotion. The servants of the Lord are well-behaved, always ready to follow His order with full faith, recognizing Him as their Lord and master.

In *prīti-rasa* and the next three *rasas*, all the eight *sāttvika-bhāvas* appear, beginning with stupefaction.

gokulendra-guṇa-gāna-rasena stambham adbhutam asau bhajamānaḥ
paśya bhakti-rasa-maṇḍapa-mūla- stambhatām vahati vaiṣṇava-varyaḥ

Look, a respectable devotee, upon hearing the sweet nectar of songs about the virtues of the Lord of Gokula, has entered a state of wonderful stupefaction (*stambha*) and has become like a pillar (*stambha*) holding up the pavilion of *bhakti-rasa*. (BRS, 3. 2. 67)

Many *vyabhicārīs* may appear along the main *prīti-rasa*, but the following ones are declared to be unfavorable: *mada*, *śrama*, *trāsa*, *apasmāra*, *ālasya*, *ugratā*, *asūyā* and *nidrā*. Of the favorable ones, *harṣa*, *garva* and *dhṛti* manifest at the time of meeting

the Lord, while *glāni*, *vyādhi* and *mṛti* may occur in the absence of the worshipable Lord.

*harim avalokya puro bhuvi patito daṇḍa-praṇāma-śata-kāmaḥ
pramada-vimugdho nṛpatiḥ punar utthānam visasmāra*

Upon seeing Lord Hari, king Bahulāśva fell to the ground, desirous of performing hundreds of prostrations, but being bewildered by joy, he forgot to rise. (BRS, 3. 2. 73)

The *prīti-rasa* has two subdivisions, *yoga* and *ayoga*, which refer to the availability of the association of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Ayoga* is further divided into the state called *utkaṇṭhita*, or anticipation of meeting, and *viyoga*, separation. Many *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* surface in the testing moments, days, years of separation, most poignantly in the servants of the Lord in Vraja.

*samajani daśā viśleṣāt te padāmbuja-sevinām
vraja-bhuvi tathā nāsīn nidrā-lavo 'pi yathā purā
yadu-vara dara-śvāsenāmī vitarkita-jīvitāḥ
satatam adhunā niśceṣṭāṅgās taṭāny adhiśerate*

O best of the Yadus! The present state of Your attendants in Vraja who are devoted to serving Your lotus feet, is due to separation from You. Just as they were unable to get a second of sleep before (in Your presence), now too they are unable to sleep (due to Your absence). Their bodies dull, they simply lie motionless on the bank of the Yamunā, and it is questionable whether they are still alive, hardly breathing. (BRS, 3. 2. 126)

At the end of the chapter devoted to *prīti-bhakti-rasa*, Rūpa Gosvāmī passingly mentions the poetic theorists (whom he designates as *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-āsvāda-bahirmukhāḥ*) who do not accept *prīti-rasa*, thinking that *dāsyā* cannot reach the state of *rasa*. He avers, "Their opinion is unfounded, because in many *Purāṇas*, especially in the *Bhāgavata*, this *rasa* is clearly mentioned." Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the ancient authorities of mundane *rasas* did not mention *dāsyā-rasa*, but that the misfortune of the present poetic theorists was that they were not sympathetic to the devotional *rasas* amply described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. For example, Bhāg. 11. 3. 32:

*kvacit rudanty acyuta-cintayā kvacit dhasanti nandanti vadanty alaukikāḥ
nṛtyanti gāyanty anuśilayanty ajam bhavanti tūṣṇīm param etya nirvṛtāḥ*

Having achieved love of God, the devotees sometimes cry out loud, absorbed in thought of the infallible Lord. Sometimes they laugh, feel great pleasure, speak out loud to the Lord, dance or sing. Such devotees, having transcended material existence, sometimes imitate the unborn Supreme Lord by acting out His pastimes. And sometimes, achieving His personal audience, they remain peaceful and silent. (BRS, 3. 2. 141)

4. 2. 4. *Preyo-bhakti-rasa or Sakhya-bhakti-rasa*

We move on to *preyo-bhakti-rasa*, or the *rasa* of friendship (*sakhya*). In this relationship, marked by an increased possessiveness towards the Lord, the sense of equality eclipses the reverence found in the previous, *prīti-rasa*, to give way to *viśrambha*, a deep sense of closeness with the Lord unrestricted by feelings of inferiority. Its definition is as follows:

*sthāyī bhāvo vibhāvādyaiḥ sakhyam ātmocitair iha
nītaś citte satām puṣṭim rasah preyān udīryate*

When the *sthāyī-bhāva* of *sakhya-rati* is nourished by suitable elements like the *vibhāvas*, and reaches its full expression in the consciousness of the devotees, it is called *preyo-bhakti-rasa* (the *rasa* of friendship). (BRS, 3. 3. 1)

The *viṣayāmbana-vibhāva* remains the same, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His two-armed, or sometimes four-armed form. The *āśraya* of *preyo-bhakti-rasa* are His confidential friends who are usually His contemporaries. They are divided into two categories, His friends in Vraja, and those outside Vraja, like the Pāṇḍavas, Draupadī, the *brāhmaṇa* Sudāmā and so on.

*sāmyena bhīti-vidhureṇa vidhīyamāna- bhakti-prapañcam anudañcat-anugraheṇa
viśrambha-sāra-nikuramba-karambitena vandetarām agha-harasya vayasya-vṛndam*

I offer my respects to the friends of Kṛṣṇa, who feel that He is their equal, and, without any fear of Him, experience a deep sense of closeness with Him that is not limited by hesitation. They possess great quantities of the nectar of confident familiarity. (BRS, 3. 3. 9)

The friendship of the cowherd boys of Vraja is considered superior to the friendship experienced by devotees outside Vraja. The cowherd boys are divided into four sub-categories: *suhṛt* (slightly older than Kṛṣṇa, with an admixture of *vatsala* in their friendship), *sakha* (slightly younger than Kṛṣṇa, with an admixture of *dāsya* in their friendship), the *priya-sakha* (of the same age as Kṛṣṇa, imbued with pure *sakhya*), and the *priya-narma-sakha* (confidential friends of the Lord that assist Him in His relations to the *gopīs*). Each group has its famous prototypes in Vraja-līlā, for example, the *suhṛt* category is personified in Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's elder brother. The *priya-sakhās* are the known cowherd boys like Śrīdāmā, and the *priya-narma-sakhās* are headed by the intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa, Subala.

*kecid eṣu sthirā jātyā mantrivat tam upāsate
tam hāsayanti cāpalāḥ kecid vaihāsikopamāḥ*

kecid ārjava-sāreṇa saralāḥ śilayanti tam
vāmā vakrīma-cakreṇa kecid vismāyayanty amum
kecit pragalbhāḥ kurvanti vitaṇḍām amunā samam
saumyāḥ sūnṛtayā vācā dhanyā dhinvanti tam pare

Some of them have a steady nature and worship Him by acting as advisors, others of a fickle nature make Him laugh, behaving like clowns. Some are honest and serve Him with sincerity, while others astonish Him by unexpected crooked behavior²⁰³. Some are proud and engage in useless arguments with Him. Some peaceful fortunate boys please Him with soft, truthful words. (BRS, 3. 3. 53-55)

The *uddīpana-vibhāvas* in *preyo-rasa* are the Lord's age and His corresponding forms, His horn, flute, conch, as well as His pastimes, jokes and heroism. His age can be either *kaumāra* (suitable for *vatsala-rasa* as well), *paugaṇḍa* or *kaiśora*²⁰⁴. The *kaumāra* and *paugaṇḍa* phases are witnessed only by the *Vraja-vāsīs*, while *Kṛṣṇa-kaiśora* attracts *preyo-bhaktas* to Him in Gokula, Mathurā and Dvārakā.

vṛndāraṇye samastāt saurabhīṇi surabhī-vṛnda-rakṣā-vihārī
guṇjāhārī śikhaṇḍa-prakaṭita-mukutaḥ pīta-paṭṭāmbara-śrīḥ
karṇābhyām karṇikāre dadhat alam urasā phulla-mallika-mālyam
nṛtyam dor-yuddha-raṅge naṭavad iha sakhīn nandayaty eṣa kṛṣṇaḥ

Śrī Kṛṣṇa dressed in a fine yellow silk cloth wore a necklace of red *guṇjā* berries, a crown of peacock feathers, *karṇikāra* flowers on His ears, and a garland of blossoming jasmine flowers on His chest. Absorbed in His pastime of protecting the cows in the fragrant forest of *Vṛndāvana*, dancing like an actor in the wrestling arena, He delighted His friends. (BRS, 3. 3. 66)

The *anubhāvas* common to all kinds of Kṛṣṇa's friends are pleasing Him with wrestling, riding on each other's shoulders, stick fighting, playing with balls and dice, sleeping and sitting close to Kṛṣṇa, telling Him jokes, playing water sports, singing and dancing with Him and so on. The boys of the *suhṛt* category act as His advisers and take care of His welfare. The *sakhās* are in charge of placing betel in His mouth, they paint His *tilaka* and other decorations. The *priya-sakhās* engage in mock-battles with Him, steal flowers and other items from Him, and enjoy the privilege of themselves being decorated by Him. The *priya-narma-sakhās* carry messages among the young ladies of *Vraja*, encourage the *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa, take Kṛṣṇa's side when they are with the *gopīs*, and side with the chief *gopīs* in Kṛṣṇa's presence, by intense argumentations and whispering in each other's ears.

²⁰³ In his commentary to this verse, Viśvanātha Cakravartī gives the example of dressing as women as an explanation of 'unexpected crooked behavior'.

²⁰⁴ *Kaumāra* lasts till the fifth year, *paugaṇḍa* till the tenth, and *kaiśora* till the fifteenth. Śrī Kṛṣṇa never grows to the phase of *yauvana*, even after leaving *Vṛndāvana*.

All the eight *sāttvika-bhāvas* are abundantly visible in the friends of Kṛṣṇa. The following are the regretful words of Śrī Rādhā (*Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, verse 37), describing the *sāttvika* ecstasy of Subala:

O Subala! You are fortunate because even in the presence of elders you freely embrace Kṛṣṇa, spreading out your pillar-like arms full of goose bumps. And Hari openly places His snakelike arms around your shoulders. Tell me, at which holy place did you perform innumerable austerities? (Quoted in BRS, 3. 3. 99)

Of the thirty-three *vyabhicārīs*, all except *augrya*, *trāsa* and *ālasya* are possible in *preyo-rasa*. As opposed to *prīti*- and *vatsala-rasas*, where the relationship is always between superiors and inferiors, the *preyo-rasa* is unique in the sense that both the Lord and His friends possess the same kind of affection for each other. The characteristic feature of *preyo-rasa*, the *viśrambha* or deep mood of confidence, may gradually increase to reach levels called *praṇaya*, *prema*, *sneha* and *rāga*.

4. 2. 5. *Vatsala-bhakti-rasa or Vātsalya-bhakti-rasa*

The fourth *laharī* of the *paścima-vibhāga* describes the *vatsala-bhakti-rasa*, parental affection.

*vibhāvādyais tu vātsalyam sthāyī puṣṭim upāgataḥ
eṣa vatsala-nāmātra prokto bhakti-raso budhaiḥ*

When *vatsala-sthāyī-bhāva* is nourished by the *vibhāvas* and other components, it is called *vatsala-bhakti-rasa* by the wise. (BRS, 3. 4. 1)

The *viṣayāmbana-vibhāva* of devotees steeped in *vātsalya* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their dependent. He is respectful and obedient to His protectors, does not manifest His powers, and accepts Himself as the object of their mercy. His elders feel responsible for teaching Him, removing His sorrow, and protecting Him, without a clear understanding of His actual greatness. In the words of mother Yaśodā:

Dear friend, because my husband and I always worship Lord Viṣṇu, He has destroyed the demons like Pūtanā attacking us. The twin trees in the courtyard have been uprooted by the wind, and again Viṣṇu has protected us. Together with Balarāma, my husband lifted up the Govardhana mountain for all to see. These acts are all difficult to comprehend. How could they be the deeds of my little baby? (BRS, 3. 4. 7)

The venerable *āśrayas* of *vātsalya* include His foster parents in Gokula, Yaśodā and Nanda, and actual parents in Mathurā, Devakī and Vasudeva, although the love of

the first pair is declared to be much deeper. *Vātsalya-rasa* also manifests in many elderly ladies in Vraja and Mathurā, like Balarāma's mother Rohiṇī, and other respectable personalities like Paurṇamāsī, Kuntī and Sāndīpanī Muni.

The *uddīpanas* in this *rasa* are Kṛṣṇa's young age and His attractive chubby form, His sparse clothing and jingling ornaments, His naughty actions, sweet utterings, laughing, playing and herding the cows.

The typical *anubhāvas* observable in *vatsala-rasa* are smelling Kṛṣṇa's head, affectionately rubbing His limbs, blessing Him, giving Him orders and instructions, caring for Him and protecting Him. All the *sāttvikas* are possible, with a special addition of milk flowing from the breasts of the ladies.

Early in the morning, with milk dripping from her breasts, Yaśoda applied *mantras* to Hari's body with a stuttering voice, painted a protective *tilaka* mark on His forehead with tears flowing from her eyes, and attached a protective amulet to His arm. Out of intense feelings of affection, she was stunned, like a statue of *vātsalya* personified. (BRS, 3. 4. 14)

Jīva Gosvāmī comments that although love in all of the *rasas* theoretically advances through stages like *prema*, *sneha* and then *rāga*, it is seen that in *vātsalya-rasa* the deep love of Kṛṣṇa's protectors is never less intense than *rāga*. *Praṇaya* as an intimate kind of affection, however, is not possible in *vatsala-rasa*, because the elders of Kṛṣṇa never think of Him as their equal. The *vyabhicārīs* in *vātsalya* are the same as those in *prīti-rasa*, with the addition of *apasmāra*. The states of yearning in separation are described in heartbreaking verses.

Just see! Now that Kṛṣṇa has gone to Mathurā, thin Yaśodā, her face covered with scattered grey hair, mindlessly injures herself by falling on the ground. She calls out, 'My son! My son!' and beats her breasts with her hands in anguish. (BRS, 3. 4. 63)

Concluding the chapter on *vatsala-bhakti-rasa*, Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes Viśvanātha Kavirāja who also accepted *vatsala* as an authentic *rasa* in his *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* (3. 201). The amazing characteristic of *vātsalya* in the devotees of the Lord is that it is not at all dependent on His reciprocation. Contrary to such selfless love, the love of the *prīti-bhaktas* is slightly diminished if the Lord does not respond with affection, while the love of *preya-bhaktas* may even completely disappear.

Although most devotees are fixed in only one of the *rasas*, the three *rasas* of *prīti*, *preyān* and *vatsala* may become mixed in certain characters. Balarāma's *sakhya* is mixed with *dāsyā* and *vatsala*, and the *prīti* of Uddhava is mixed with *sakhya*. Yudhiṣṭhira's *vatsala* is mixed with *dāsyā*, and so on.

4. 2. 6. *Madhura-bhakti-rasa or Mādhurya-bhakti-rasa*

The last *laharī* describes the highest kind of devotional emotion, *madhura-rati*. In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, it is treated in a condensed fashion²⁰⁵, and further details on *madhura-bhakti-rasa* are available as a separate work, the *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*.

ātmocitair vibhāvādyaiḥ puṣṭim nītā satām hṛdi
madhurākhyo bhaved bhakti- raso 'sau madhurā ratih

When *madhura-rati* is nourished by suitable *vibhāvas* and other elements in the hearts of devotees, it becomes the *madhura-bhakti-rasa*. (BRS, 3. 5. 1)

The *viṣayālbhāna-vibhāva* in *madhura-rati* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the abode of abundant beauty, pastimes and skill in all the arts which cannot be equaled or surpassed. Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes from the *Gīta-govinda* (1. 11) of Jayadeva:

viśveṣām anurañjanena janayann ānandam indīvara-
śreṇī-śyāmala-komalair upanayann aṅgair anaṅgotsavam
svacchandam vraja-sundarībhīr abhitaḥ praty-aṅgam ālīngitaḥ
śṛṅgāraḥ sakhi mūrtimān iva madhau mugdho harir kṛīḍati

O friend! Attractive Hari produces bliss in everyone within the universe by inducing their love, and creates a festival of Cupid by His limbs, softer and darker in color than the blue lotus. His every limb is embraced spontaneously by the young beauties of Vraja as He enjoys the spring season like an incarnation of *madhura-rasa*. (Quoted in BRS, 3. 5. 5)

The *āśraya* of *madhura-rasa* are the young ladies of Vraja, endowed with the most excellent freshest sweetness. Their hearts are filled with waves of *prema* and they worship Hari as their lover. Rūpa Gosvāmī supplies another verse from the *Gīta-govinda* as a proof of the supreme superiority of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu, among all the *āśrayas* of this *rasa*.²⁰⁶ The love between Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa is never, under any circumstance, covered by other relationships or different *bhāvas*, either compatible or incompatible.

²⁰⁵ Rūpa Gosvāmī reasons, *nivṛttānupayogitvād duruhatvād ayam rasaḥ / rahasyatvāc ca saṁkṣīpya vitatāṅgo* 'pi likhyate, "Even though this *rasa* is extremely vast, it is discussed here only in abridged form, because it has a very secret nature, it is difficult to understand, and its detailed description is not useful for those who are averse to it due to equating it with mundane *śṛṅgāra*." (BRS, 3. 5. 2)

²⁰⁶ The verse quoted is (*Gīta-govinda* 3. 1.), *kaṁsārīr api saṁsāra-baddha-śṛṅkhalām / rādhām ādhāya hṛdaye tatyāja vraja-sundarīḥ*, "When Rādhā left the arena of the *rāsa* dance out of pride, Kṛṣṇa gave up the other beautiful women of Vraja and left the arena, thinking only of Rādhā who was bound by the chains of the highest love."

At a short distance stands the queen of Vraja, and His friends are surrounding Him. Candrāvalī is right before His eyes, and the demon Ariṣṭa stands on a heap of stones nearby. But Kṛṣṇa's restless sidelong glance, like a flash of lightning, descends only on Rādhā, hidden behind a bush of flowering creepers to His right. (BRS, 3. 5. 22)

The famous *uddīpana* of *madhura-rasa* is the sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute. The *anubhāvas* are sidelong glances, smiles and so on. The *sāttvikas* are all profoundly manifest. All of the *vyabhicārīs* except *augrya* and *ālasya* may appear along the main *sthāyī*. Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes an example of *nirveda* from the *Padyāvalī*:

mā muñca pañca-śara pañca-śarīm śarīre mā siñca sāndra-makaranda-rasena vāyo
aṅgāni tat-praṇaya-bhaṅga-vigarhitāni nālambitum katham api kṣamate 'dya jīvaḥ

O Cupid! Stop shooting your five arrows into my body! O Wind! Stop sprinkling me with the concentrated juice of forest flowers! These limbs of mine are condemned because they have caused a break in the love of Kṛṣṇa, and my soul can no longer endure to reside in them. (BRS, 3. 5. 17)

Madhura-rasa being the pure, spiritual variety of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, it is similar to its mundane counterpart in the division into *vipralambha* (love in separation) and *sambhoga* (love in union). The *vipralambha* has three subvarieties, *pūrva-rāga* (affection prior to meeting), *māna* (sulking) and *pravāsa* (physical separation). An example of *pūrva-rāga* is a verse from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the words of Kṛṣṇa after receiving a letter from Rukmiṇī²⁰⁷:

yathā vinidrā yac cittā rukmiṇī kamalekṣaṇā
tathāham api tac-citto nidrām ca na labhe niśi
vedāham rukmiṇyā dveṣān mamodvāho nivāritaḥ

Just as the mind of the lotus-eyed Rukmiṇī is focused on Me, not allowing her to sleep, My mind is also focused on her, making my nights sleepless as well. I know that her brother Rukmī, who does not like Me, opposes our marriage. (Bhāg. 10. 53. 2, quoted in BRS, 3. 5. 28)

Māna (sulking) and *pravāsa* (separation after meeting) are known from other scriptures and are treated only briefly. The heartbreaking, obsessed states of the ladies in Vraja after the departure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā have been an inspiration to devotional poets for millennia. Rūpa Gosvāmī concludes the chapter on a happier

²⁰⁷ Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the example of the *pūrva-rāga* of Rukmiṇī was chosen as it is only mentioned once, while the *pūrva-rāga* of the *gopīs* of Vraja is described again and again by Śukadeva, for example in the verses of the *Gopī-gītā* (Bhāg. 10. 31) beginning with *jayati te 'dhikam janmanā vrajaḥ*.

note, with a consideration of *nitya-sthiti*, the eternal union without separation²⁰⁸. In the commentary, Jīva Gosvāmī cites a famous verse from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10. 90. 48), illustrating such *nitya-sthiti* for all the ladies attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo
yadu-vara-parīṣat-svair dorbhir asyann adharmam
sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ su-smita śrī-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanitānām vardhayann kāma-devam*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa lives among the cowherd men and among the Yādavas, and is conclusively the son of both Devakī and Yaśodā. He is the guide of the Yādavas and of the cowherd men, and with His mighty arms He destroys anything inauspicious in Vraja, Mathurā and Dvārakā. By His presence He removes the difficulties for all beings, moving and inert, as well as the suffering of separation for the inhabitants of Vraja and Dvārakā. His blissful smiling face always increases the desires of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana and the queens of Dvārakā. This is His eternal position. (An extended translation by Jīva Gosvāmī, in his commentary to BRS, 3. 5. 35)

4. 2. 7. The Secondary Bhakti-Rasas

The *gauṇa-bhakti-rasas* (secondary *rasas*) are the topic of the last, *uttara-vibhāga* of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. All seven of them are Bharata's original *rasas*, but in the system of Rūpa Gosvāmī they lose much of their importance because of the centrality and weight of the primary *rasas*. It is immediately apparent that they are much less overwhelming and deep in their nature. They are 'almost like *vyabhicārīs*', but have been treated as separate *bhāvas* and *rasas* in conformity with Bharata Muni and other literary authorities²⁰⁹.

Rūpa Gosvāmī writes about the *gauṇī-rati*, or secondary love:

*vibhāvotkarṣajo bhāva- viśeṣo yo 'nugṛhyate
saṅkucantyā svayaṁ ratyā sā gauṇī ratir ucyate
hāso vismaya utsāhaḥ śokaḥ krodho bhayaṁ tathā
jugupsā cety asau bhāva- viśeṣaḥ saptadhoditaḥ*

A particular emotion that is born from the excellence of the excitants and is nourished by a primary love that has contracted itself is called secondary love. There

²⁰⁸ The *nitya-sthiti* has been described before, in BRS, 3. 3. 128, where both Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī give elaborate explanations of the *prakaṭa*- and *aprakaṭa-līlā* of the Lord. Separation appears only in the *prakaṭa-līlā*.

²⁰⁹ Mentioned in BRS, 4. 7. 13-14.

are seven types of such particular emotions: humor, amazement, effort, sorrow, anger, fear and disgust. (BRS, 2. 5. 39-40)

The philosophy underlying the concept of secondary emotions is explained thus:

*hāsādāv atra bhinno 'pi śuddha-sattva-viśeṣataḥ
parārthayā rater yogād rati-śabdaḥ prayujyate*

Here humor and the other forms of secondary love are different from the forms of primary love in that they are not a special form of *śuddha-sattva*; however, because of their association with a primary love that is 'supportive of another' (*parārtha*), the word love remains applicable. (BRS, 2. 5. 42)

*ratitvāt prathamaikaiva sapta hāsādayas tathā
ity aṣṭau sthāyino yāvad rasāvasthām na saṁśritāḥ*

Until primary love and the seven forms of secondary love reach the position of a *rasa*, they remain the eight foundational emotions. (BRS, 2. 5. 73)

In the next seven subsections, the secondary *bhakti-rasas* will be discussed, along with their specific components and modes of appearance. For example, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is admitted as the *viṣayālbhana* of all the secondary *rasas* except *bībhatsa*, where the cause of disgust can only be the material body, one's fate, and similar items. When a secondary *rati* predominates over the primary *rati* (which becomes *parārthā*), it is called a *gauṇa-rati*. All seven secondary *ratis* should be understood in this manner. For some time in a particular pastime, in a particular devotee, the secondary *ratis* take on beautiful forms by the influence of the primary *rati*, and for the time being, they can be treated as *sthāyi-bhāvas*. Therefore, these seven secondary forms appear in all devotees at various times, and are not fixed in particular persons. Even though they arise spontaneously, they disappear when they become covered with contrary *bhāvas* arising from the primary *rati*. The *vyabhicārīs* also disappear after a while, but upon disappearing do not leave behind any *saṁskāras*, which the secondary *ratis* do. The secondary forms of *rati* may appear even in the enemies of Kṛṣṇa, but because they lack the primary *rati* behind the secondary one, those *ratis* never become *bhakti-rasas*.

4. 2. 8. Hāsya-bhakti-rasa

Especially in the case of *hāsya-bhakti-rasa* (devotional humor), it has to be made clear that in secondary *rasas*, we do not always find fixed *ālbhanas* like in the primary ones. The implication in *hāsya-rasa* is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not always Himself

the object of fun, nor is the *hāsyā-rasa* exhausted merely in fixed personalities fully associated with *hāsyā*, like jesters. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the *viṣayāmbana* of *hāsyā-rasa* in the sense of being the *viṣaya* of the *parāṛthā-rati*. Jīva Gosvāmī comments that there is no direct *viṣaya* of *hāsyā-rasa*, because *hāsyā* has the form of simply blossoming in the heart. It is compared to the blossoming of a lotus which does not direct its blossoming to any particular object. The Lord and His devotees act merely as causes for the *hāsyā-rasa* to appear. The *āśraya* are mostly elderly people and children, but that is not at all absolute. Often, the cause of laughter is not Kṛṣṇa Himself, but the particular situations involving Him due to the existence of primary *ratis* in the devotees affected by *hāsyā*. For example, the words of Yaśodā:

O master of sages! Why did you suddenly hide your laughing behind your beautiful clothes, when I only asked you to look at the hand of my dark-complexioned boy, and to please tell me whether he will have a long life and be the lord of millions of cows? (BRS, 4. 1. 11)

The general *uddīpanas* of *hāsyā-rasa* are humorous words, dress and behavior, either of Kṛṣṇa or His devotees. The *anubhāvas* are the quivering of the nose, lips and cheeks. The main *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* are *harṣa*, *ālasya* and *avahitthā*. According to a traditional division, laughing is understood in six consequent varieties, *smita* (slight smiling), *hasita* (open smiling), *vihasita* (audible laughing), *avahasita* (intense laughter), *apahasita* (uncontrollable laughter) and *atīhasita* (extreme laughter)²¹⁰. An illustration of slight smiling (*smita*):

‘O my strong brother! Because I stole some yogurt, the wicked old lady is chasing Me to tie Me up. Where should I hide? Please protect Me quickly!’ Saying these words to His elder brother in a choked voice, Kṛṣṇa fled in fear. Seeing this, the faces of the sages in the sky blossomed in smiles. (BRS, 4. 1. 17)

An example of audible laughing (*vihasita*):

‘My friends! Do not be afraid! Come, let us enter this house and steal the thick yogurt. I assure you, Jaṭilā is deeply asleep, snoring loudly.’ When Kṛṣṇa said this, the old lady, who was only pretending to sleep, laughed loudly, showing her worn teeth. (BRS, 4. 1. 21)

Sometimes the person instigating the *hāsyā* may not even be present, but that does not seem to diminish the ability of the aesthetic ingredients to produce a full *hāsyā-rasa*. As in the following jest, which retains its comic nature even when it is repeated in another assembly, making fun of Kuṭilā behind her back:

²¹⁰ In the traditional theory, the loud and raucous varieties of laughing are only possible in children and persons of lower rank, but in the special environment of Kṛṣṇa-līlā, due to the effects of the devotional aesthetic elements, they may also appear in respectable personalities.

śimbī-lambī-kucāsi dardura-vadhū-vispardhi nāsākṛtis
 tvaṁ jīryad-dulī-dṛṣṭir oṣṭha-tulitāṅgārā mṛdangodarī
 kā tvattaḥ kuṭīle parāsti jaṭilā-putri kṣitau sundarī
 puṇyena vraja-subhruvām tava dhṛtiṁ hartum na vaṁśī kṣamā

O Kuṭilā, daughter of Jaṭilā! Your breasts are like string beans. Your nose is more beautiful than the nose of a female frog. Your eyes are like old turtles. Your lips are like burning cinders of fire. Your stomach is like a big drum. Where in this world is there a beauty more attractive than you? By the strength of your piety, only you, among all the ladies in Vraja, have withstood the attraction of the flute. (BRS, 4. 1. 29)

4. 2. 9. *Adbhuta-bhakti-rasa*

The *viṣayāmbana* of *adbhuta-rasa* (devotional wonder) is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the *āśraya* are His devotees. They become overwhelmed in contact with His superhuman actions, forms and qualities, which all act as the *uddīpanas* of this *rasa*. The *uddīpanas* can be direct or inferred. The direct experience of wonder is further divided according to its source, into visual, audible and vocal varieties²¹¹. An example of a direct visual preception of the extraordinary acts of Kṛṣṇa is given below:

kva stanya-gandhi-vadanendur asau śīśus te
 govardhanaḥ śikhara-ruddha-ghanaḥ kva cāyam
 bhoḥ paśya savya-kara-kandukitācalendraḥ
 khelann iva sphurati hanta kim indra-jālam

O Yaśodā! Where is your little son with the moonlike face still smelling of milk! And where is the Govardhana mountain, whose summits pierce the clouds! But alas, see how the boy holds the king of mountains atop His left hand, as if He were playing with a ball! Amazing! Is this some magic trick? (BRS, 4. 2. 8)

In *adbhuta-rasa*, opening the eyes wide is the common *anubhāva*. Many *sāttvika-bhāvas* are also appropriate in its context, for example, stupefaction, tears and horripilation. The prominent *vyabhicārīs* are *āvega*, *harṣa* and *jādyam*.

As a conclusion to this *laharī*, Rūpa Gosvāmī comments that, as far as wonder goes, it is seen to be dependent on the relationship between its *viṣaya* and *āśraya*. For example, when an unloved person performs extraordinary acts, that is not very astonishing, but when a loved person performs actions even a little uncommon, they immediately produce astonishment. Of course, the Lord is the most beloved object of

²¹¹ Of these three, the first two are clear, by seeing or by hearing about the wondrous acts. The third, vocal, refers to becoming affected with wonder again in the midst of recounting a previous experience of wonder.

the devotees, and His deeds are beyond all possible wonders. The devotees, all prone to admiring the Lord, are backed up by their primary *rati* in relation to Him, and therefore able to appreciate His extraordinary deeds. These factors facilitate the appearance of deep states of amazement in the *āśrayas* of this *rasa*.

4. 2. 10. *Vīra-bhakti-rasa*

When the secondary *utsāha-rati* (energetic enthusiasm) is augmented with the other favorable components like the *vibhāvas*, it attains the relishable state of *vīra-bhakti-rasa* (devotional heroism). Its *ālambana* are the devotees inspired with heroism of four different kinds, *yuddha-vīras*, *dāna-vīras*, *dayā-vīras* and *dharma-vīras*. *Utsāha-rati* can affect any devotee, but they respond differently according to their own natures.

The *yuddha-vīras* please Kṛṣṇa with their eagerness for mock fighting, assuming the role of combatants, fighting against Him or against His close friends. Sometimes, even friends may stage a wrestling match, as described in the *Hari-varṇā*:

*tathā gāṇḍīva-dhanvānam vikrīḍan madhusūdana
jigāya bharata-śreṣṭham kuntyāḥ pramukhato vibhuḥ*

The almighty Madhusūdana, fighting with Arjuna, the best of the Bharatas and the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow, defeated him in front of mother Kuntī. (Quoted in BRS, 4. 3. 10)

The particular *uddīpanas* of *yuddha-vīra-rasa* are boasting, challenging the opponents to fight, rivalry, showing strength, taking up weapons and being aroused by the words of the opposing party. If these *uddīpanas* are acted out merely for one's own awareness, and do not rouse anyone else into *yuddha-vīra-rasa*, then they are only *anubhāvas*. Additional *anubhāvas* are pride, roaring like a lion, trotting about prepared for battle, enthusiasm to fight even without assistance, the determination to not flee from the field of battle, and consoling the fearful with one's courage.

When proud Kṛṣṇa, the moon of the ocean of Nanda, tightened His belt with great show, eager to wrestle, Sudāmā, roaring like a lion, danced around with his hairs standing on end, and his eagerness for fighting increased. Glories to his constant self-confidence! (BRS, 4. 3. 16)

Yuddhotsāha-rati refers to a deep desire to win, instigated either by one's own strength or aroused by others, and it is the *sthāyi-bhāva* in *yuddha-vīra-rasa*. It is usually exemplified in the cowherd boys close to Kṛṣṇa. When their parents forbid them to fight with the Lord, their fighting instinct may be subdued, but surfaces

again away from home in the company of other cowherd boys. Some of them, however, do not need any external encouragement.

*śukākāraṁ prekṣya me bāhu-daṇḍaṁ mā tvaṁ bhaiṣiḥ kṣudra re bhadrasena
helārambheṇādyā nirjitya rāmaṁ śrīdāmāhaṁ kṛṣṇam evāhvayeya*

O poor Bhadrasena! I am Śrīdāmā. Do not be afraid on seeing my arm thick like an elephant's trunk! Today, I will defeat Balarāma in a mock battle, and then I will challenge Kṛṣṇa Himself! (BRS, 4. 3. 20)

Rūpa Gosvāmī specifies that *vīra-bhakti-rasa* is only possible between the Lord and His friends, and not His enemies. When the actual inauspicious enemies are encountered, these friends of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself react by showing anger, and their mood changes to *raudra-rasa*. This difference between *vīra-rasa* and *raudra-rasa* is discernible also from the differing *anubhāvas*: the redness of the eyes appears only in *raudra-rasa*, never in *vīra*.

The second variety, *dāna-vīra-rasa*, has *dānotsāha-rati* as its *sthāyi-bhāva*. The *dāna-vīras* can be of two kinds, either they are generous givers, or are so renounced that they desist from accepting what is offered to them by the Lord. The givers may be inspired to donate on the auspicious occasions, or at any time, either out of love or as part of the worship. Classical examples are Nanda Mahārāja giving charity at the time of the *jāta-karma* of his son, or Bali Mahārāja in his encounter with Vāmanadeva, as described in the *Bhāgavata* and other *Purāṇas*. An example of not wanting to accept anything from the Lord is Dhruva Mahārāja.

*sthānābhilāṣī tapasi sthito 'haṁ tvāṁ prāptavān deva-munīndra-guhyam
kācaṁ vicinvan api divya-ratnaṁ svāmin kṛtārtho 'smi varaṁ na yāce*

O Lord! I desired the king's throne and was performing austerities, but I attained You, who are hidden from even the chief *devatās* and sages. I was searching for a piece of glass, but came across an amazing jewel. Having attained You, I feel fulfilled, and do not desire any benedictions. (*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*, 7. 28, quoted in BRS, 4. 3. 44)

The *dayā-vīra-rasa* is observed in devotees who have a deep sense of compassion towards the Lord, and, to pacify His suffering, wish to offer anything they have to Him. In cases of such a *rasa*, the Lord pretends to be sorrowful and is usually disguised, so that the mood of the giver does not change into *vātsalya*. If they know Him as the Lord, then the attitude of giving to Him is the ordinary *dāna-vīra*.

The last variety, the *dharma-vīra-rasa* is experienced by steady devotees who are grounded in their conviction to always follow the rules of *dharma* in a way pleasing to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *uddīpanas* for such devotees are hearing the authorized scriptures, and the *anubhāvas* are proper conduct, adherence to regulations, tolerance and self-control. The standard example of this category is Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

As the last comment, Rūpa Gosvāmī adds that other poetic theorists like Bopadeva have included the *dayā-vīra* variety in *dāna-vīra*. Others like Dhanika (commentator of the *Daśarūpaka*) postulate only the *dāna*, *dayā* and *yuddha* varieties, and deny *dharma-vīra*. This wraps up the delineation of the *vīra-rasa* in the third *laharī* of the *uttara-vibhāga*.

4. 2. 11. *Karuṇa-bhakti-rasa*

The fourth *laharī* discusses *karuṇa-bhakti-rasa* (devotional compassion), which appears when the *śoka-rati* (sorrow) is intensified by proper accessories in the mind of a devotee. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is eternally blissful, by the special circumstances within the world of *prema*, He may seem to fall into an unfortunate situation. In such a state, He is the *ālambana* of *karuṇa-rasa*. Such a *rasa* is impossible for the *śānta-bhaktas* because they never lose sight of the Lord's omnipotence. Other possible *ālambanas* of this *rasa* are Kṛṣṇa's dear ones, or, in the situation of a devotee, his own relatives or friends who do not have the fortune to relish the mellow of *bhakti*.

The *uddīpanas*, as elsewhere, are Kṛṣṇa's actions, qualities and forms, but in special circumstances which are adequate for the development of compassion. The typical *anubhāvas* are drying of the mouth, moaning, slackening of the body, sighing, shouting, falling on the ground, beating the ground and other items, or the chest. All eight *sāttvikas* are appropriate, as well as *vyabhicārīs* like *jāḍyam*, *nirveda*, *glāni*, *dainya*, *viṣāda* and so on. Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes an appropriate example from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10. 16. 10):

taṁ nāga-bhoga-parivṛtam adṛṣṭa-ceṣṭam ālokyā tat-priya-sakhāḥ paśupā bhṛśārtāḥ
kṛṣṇe 'rpitātma-suhṛd-artha-kalatra-kāmā duḥkhānuśoka-bhayam ūdha-dhiyo nipetuḥ

When the members of the cowherd community, who had accepted Kṛṣṇa as their dearest friend, saw Him enveloped in the coils of the Kālīya snake, motionless, they were greatly disturbed. They had offered Kṛṣṇa everything – their very selves, their families, their wealth, wives and all pleasure. At the sight of the Lord in the clutches of the snake, their intelligence became deranged by grief, lamentation and fear, and thus they fell to the ground. (Quoted in BRS, 4. 4. 8)

Rūpa Gosvāmī comments that while it is possible for *hāsyā* and other secondary emotions to appear without the primary *rati*, it is not so in the case of *śoka*. The special distinction of *śoka* is that it always depends on the amount of primary *rati* existing in the devotee. If the primary *rati* is greater, the *śoka* will be greater as well. In *karuṇa-bhakti-rasa*, there is also a characteristic lack of awareness of Kṛṣṇa's

powers. It is not brought about by the power of *avidyā*, but by the special heightened appearances of *premā* which facilitate the tasting of the *karuṇa-rasa*. Even when the sorrow attains excessive proportions, it still produces a very unusual and inconceivable kind of happiness. Jīva Gosvāmī explains that this is so because the cause of the appearance of this sorrow is absorption in the sweetness of a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and, because every devotee is connected with the blissful Lord, he is ultimately blissful himself as well. He is confident either through his particular kind of *premā*, or by assumption, that ultimately there will be happiness, and so this lamentation produces a tendency towards happiness. But it is difficult to understand or describe it because the underlying happiness is covered by the incidental experience of suffering.

4. 2. 12. *Raudra-bhakti-rasa*

The fifth *laharī* describes the appearance of *raudra-bhakti-rasa* (devotionally inspired anger), when the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *krodha-rati* is accompanied with the other elements of devotional relish. Three possible *viśayas* of *krodha-rati* exist, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, friendly persons and unfriendly persons. The *āśrayas* are all kinds of devotees, for example the *sakhīs* or the old ladies of Vṛndāvana. The *sakhīs* react to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mistreatment of their leading *gopī*, while the old ladies are angry when they see Him in close association with the young girls.

*are yuvati-taskara prakāṣam eva vadhvāḥ paṭas
tavorasi nirikṣyate bata na neti kiṁ jalpasi
aho vraja-nivāsinaḥ śṛṇuta kiṁ na vikrośanam
vrajeśvara-sutena me suta-gr̥he 'gnir utthāpitaḥ*

Govardhana's mother, the mother-in-law of Candrāvalī, says: 'Hey You thief of young ladies! I clearly see the scarf of my daughter-in-law on Your chest! How dare You deny it? O people of Vraja! Why don't you hear my shouting? The prince of Vraja has set fire to the house of my son!' (BRS, 4. 5. 6)

Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that all the inhabitants of Vraja are full of auspicious *premā* towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and even the anger of this lady is actually energized by her essential affection for Him. The acts of Kṛṣṇa make her angry and she shouts, but no one cares to listen to her complaints because all of them possess deep love for Kṛṣṇa and cannot relate to His apparent faults. The lady shouts just so that she facilitates the enjoyment of a variety of *rasas* for Kṛṣṇa and His close associates.

When anger is directed towards a friendly person, three patterns of behavior are possible causes. That friendly person may either be inattentive in Kṛṣṇa's service, or

rashly imagines Him strong and leaves Him unprotected. Rohiṇī may chastise Yaśodā for her fainting, and thus leaving the child on His own. Yaśodā, in turn, may become angry at the cowherd boys who send Kṛṣṇa into danger, confident of His strength. The third possible character which instigates anger in friends is a proud lady in a sulking mood, affected by jealousy. The *sakhīs* become upset with their leading *gopīs* when the relationship with Kṛṣṇa is broken due to their stubbornness.

*dur māna-mantha-mathite kathayāmi kim te
dūram prayāhi sa vidhe tava jājjvalimi
hā dhik priyeṇa cikurāñcita-piñcha-koṭyā
nirmañchitāgra-caraṇāpy aruṇānanāsi*

One of the *sakhīs* says, 'Rādhā, what should I say? You were agitated by the churning rod of indignation. Go far away from me! I am burning just by being near You. Even though the peacock feather decorating Kṛṣṇa's hair was fanning the tips of Your toes when He bowed down to You, Your face remained reddish due to anger, like the dawn.' (BRS, 4. 5. 14)

Anger may be directed to unfriendly persons, who are either inimical to His devotees or to Kṛṣṇa Himself. Those who are inimical to His devotees, like Akrūra, put obstacles to Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with them. Those inimical to Kṛṣṇa Himself are His direct enemies.

In all kinds of *raudra-bhakti-rasa*, the *uddīpanas* for becoming angry are sarcastic laughs, deceptive speaking, frowns and disrespect, manifested either by Kṛṣṇa, by friendly persons, or by those inimical. The *anubhāvas* specific to *raudra* are wringing the hands, grinding the teeth, reddish eyes, biting the lips, contracting the brows, beating others, silence, hanging the head down, sighing, cursing, quivering of the lower lip and so on. All the *sāttvika-bhāvas* such as stupefaction manifest. Typical *vyabhicārīs* would be *āvega*, *jaḍatā*, *garva*, *nirveda*, *moha*, *asūyā*, *augrya* and *śrama*. Anger is further divided into three kinds, *kopa* (directed at enemies), *manyu* (directed at friends) and *roṣa* (the anger of the ladies towards Kṛṣṇa). This *roṣa* becomes a *vyabhicāri-bhāva* in *madhura-rasa*.

The anger inherent in characters like Śiśupāla, however, being devoid of the primary positive *rati*, cannot become *bhakti-rasa*.

4. 2. 13. Bhayānaka-bhakti-rasa

When *bhaya-rati* is augmented with the appropriate *vibhāvas* and so on, it transforms into a *rasa* called *bhayānaka-bhakti-rasa* (devotional fear). The discussion of its *viṣayālambana* is a complicated matter. Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that broadly,

two circumstances exist. In the first, the sinners or devotees of Kṛṣṇa act improperly and fear punishment from Him, or, in the second, the enemies of Kṛṣṇa try to harm Kṛṣṇa and cause fear in the devotees. Rūpa Gosvāmī writes that in the first case, Kṛṣṇa is the *viṣaya*, while in the second, the enemies are the *viṣaya*. Jīva Gosvāmī goes further and argues that the *viṣaya* of a secondary *rasa* is defined as the repose of the primary *rati*, and not the external cause of the secondary *rati*, in this case fear. He therefore proposes that in the first case delineated above, the devotee is both the *viṣaya* and the *āśraya* of fear, and Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate cause of fear. In the case of enemies, Kṛṣṇa is the *viṣaya* (the devotees are afraid for His safety) and the devotees are the *āśraya*, while the enemies are only an external cause of fear.

An example of fear in a devotee due to improper action is Jāmbavān, the king of bears:

O king of the *ṛkṣas*! Why has your face become dried up? Calm down the wild palpitations of your heart. Just become natural, and stop thinking about it. By expressing your prowess mixed with raging anger you have done Me a great service, since I was eager for a fight. (BRS, 4. 6. 4)

The *uddīpanas* in *bhayānaka-rasa* are frowns and other threats in the objects of fear. The *anubhāvas* are drying of the face, heavy breathing, looking backwards, hiding oneself, becoming unsteady, looking for shelter and shouting. Among the *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*, *trāsa*, *mṛti*, *cāpalyam*, *āvega*, *viṣāda*, *moha*, *apasmāra* and *śaṅkā* are most frequent.

*hā kiṁ karomi taralāṁ bhavanāntarāle
gopendra gopaya balād uparudhya bālam
kṣmā-maṇḍalena saha cañcalayan mano me
śṛṅgāni laṅghayati paśya turaṅga-daityaḥ*

Yaśodā said, 'Alas, what shall I do! O king of the *gopas*, please protect this restless child by forcefully keeping Him within the palace. The demon Keśī is agitating my mind as well as the whole earth. See! He is jumping over the trees!' (BRS, 4. 6. 6)

Bhaya-rati can only appear in the devotees. They become afraid because of their own offenses, or because of seeing, hearing about or remembering the fearful persons (their form, nature or powers). Again, the evil kings like Kāṁsa who are permanently overpowered by fear of Kṛṣṇa, cannot become *āśrayas* of the *bhayānaka-bhakti-rasa* due to their inimical foundational attitude.

4. 2. 14. *Bībhatsa-bhakti-rasa*

When *jugupsā-rati* is stimulated by proper *vibhāvas*, it grows into *bībhatsa-bhakti-rasa* (devotionally inspired disgust). Needless to say, the object of disgust can never be Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Persons prone to experiencing this *rasa* are the *śānta-bhaktas* and the *āśritas* (those who have taken shelter of the Lord). Upon relishing the unbounded joy in His shelter, they are reminded of their past and experience disgust. Its causes may be their previous bad habits, their whole mundane situation, or their bodies. In the words of Yāmunācārya,

yad avadhi mama cetaḥ kṛṣṇa-pādāravinde
nava-nava-rasa-dhāmany udyataṁ rantum āsīt
tad avadhi bata nārī-saṅgame smaryamāne
bhavati mukha-vikāraḥ suṣṭhu-niṣṭhivanaṁ ca

Ever since my heart has become eager to play at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the abode of ever-fresh *rasa*, when I think of association of women, my mouth curls up in disgust and I spit. (Quoted in BRS, 2. 5. 72)

The common variety of *jugupsā* is aroused by foul smelling items and so on, while the second variety is called *viveka-jā*, born of discrimination. Because the devotees are by nature very pure, every little bit of unwanted things, internal or external, disturbs them greatly. In this way, their general *rati* acts to enhance their proneness to *jugupsā*.

asṛṇ-mūtrākīrṇe ghana-śamala-pañka-vyatikare
vasann eṣa klinno jaḍa-tanur ahaṁ mātur udare
labhe cetaḥ-kṣobhaṁ tava bhajana-karmākṣamatayā
tad asmin kaṁsāre kuru mayi kṛpā-sāgara kṛpām

O enemy of Kāṁsa! Trapped in this immovable body, lying wet within the womb of the mother, covered with thick feces and filled with blood and urine, I am greatly depressed. O Ocean of mercy, be merciful to me, who am unable to worship You. (BRS, 4. 7. 10)

As a last comment, Rūpa Gosvāmī admits that the seven secondary *ratis* have been accepted as such only in accordance with the opinion of ancient scholars such as Bharata Muni. The primary *rasas* are the actual *bhakti-rasas*, based on firm emotional relationships with Hari, and the secondary seven only act as *vyabhicārīs* within these primary *rasas*.

∞ Chapter Five ∞

Alaukika – What Does It Mean?

5. 1. Abhinavagupta's Aesthetic Theory

Scholars studying the devotional aesthetic theory of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī have tried to analyze the possible influences of previous aesthetic and poetic theorists on his articulation of the experience of *bhakti-rasa*. Usually, two distinct schools are postulated, one is the 'northern school' that arose mainly among Kashmirian theorists and has crystallized in its final form around the figure of Abhinavagupta²¹². The second is sometimes called 'the southern school'²¹³ which differs from the northern school in its ways of apprehending the aesthetic experience. The broad difference lies in how they understand the connection between *rasa* and *bhāva*. The northern school has come to consider *rasa* as something essentially different and more sophisticated than mere *bhāva*, while the southern school seems to remain somewhat faithful to the simplicity of Bharata's statements, to the effect that *rasa* is more or less simply an intensification and a mature stage of *bhāva*. The northern school – due to having raised *rasa* to an artificial position of depersonalized enjoyment possible only inside the theatre – is forced to admit that *rasa* can only reside in the minds of the audience. The southern school, however, faces no such restraint and is ready to agree that *rasa* can appear in any person on the condition of his previous *saṃskāras*²¹⁴.

Some have called the two schools the 'yogī' and the 'bhogī' schools respectively²¹⁵. The division is perhaps too sharp and does not take into account the many obvious overlappings. The northern school surely was shaped by the strong opinions of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, but the southern school is not so easily definable. It is true, generally, that a few southern poetic theorists differed from the focus of the northern school, the *śānta-rasa*, and have favored *śṛṅgāra-rasa* instead, but there is no overall agreement among them about the many details of the aesthetic theory. For example, while king Bhoja accepts *śānta-rasa*, Siṃha Bhūpāla, another southern king and a scholarly writer, criticizes Bhoja for his acceptance of *śānta-rasa* in his theory.

²¹² The theorists of this school are Ānandavardhana, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, Abhinavagupta, Viśvanātha Kavirāja, Dhanañjaya, Mammaṭa, Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha and so on.

²¹³ The theorists of the southern school would include Daṇḍī, Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa, Bhoja, Śāradātanaya, Bhānudatta, Siṃha Bhūpāla, and perhaps others. Of those, Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa is probably a Kashmirian.

²¹⁴ Such a stance is much more appealing to Rūpa Gosvāmī, who builds his *bhakti-rasa* theory for the use of responsive devotionally surcharged practitioners of *bhakti-yoga* who experience the deepening of their own emotion upon coming in mere contact with devotional aesthetic ingredients, not limited to the sphere of the theatre.

²¹⁵ D. L. Haberman (Tr.), *The Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu of Rūpa Gosvāmī* (Delhi, 2003), p. xlvii.

In certain aspects of his theory of *bhakti-rasa*, Rūpa Gosvāmī may seem to be leaning towards the southern understanding²¹⁶, as opposed to the northern one. Below is a short comparison of the views of Abhinavagupta and Bhoja, the main protagonists of the two schools.

The *rasa* experience for Abhinavagupta might be characterized as a special contemplation of an impersonal emotion. The experience involves a temporary loss of individual identity and a generalized experience of an emotion raised to consciousness by the drama. The *rasa* experience for Bhoja is an intensely personal and emotional experience in which self-identity is heightened as one identifies with the very personal situation of the actor. For Abhinava, *rasa* involves the absence of personal emotion, whereas for Bhoja it involves the intensification of emotion. Abhinava holds that it is a generalized experience of no particular person, while Bhoja maintains that it is the result of an identification with a particular person. For Abhinava detachment and distancing are the foundations of the *rasa* experience; for Bhoja attachment and identification are the foundation of the *rasa* experience. Abhinava insists that *rasa* is only possible for members of the audience; Bhoja argues that although it is primarily the experience of the original characters it can be experienced by anyone who has the proper *vāsanā* and can identify with the original characters. (...) *Rasa* for Abhinava is manifested in a manner that marks it off radically from the *sthāyi-bhāva*, whereas for Bhoja *rasa* is the transformation of the *sthāyi-bhāva* wherein the latter becomes intensified and culminates in a state of maturity. The preeminent *rasa* for Abhinava is *śānta*, an experience of utter tranquility wherein one has transcended ordinary emotional experience, whereas the preeminent *rasa* for Bhoja is *śṛṅgāra*, the very pinnacle of intense emotional experience.²¹⁷

Nevertheless, to say that Rūpa Gosvāmī was not at all influenced by the 'yogī school' and was influenced only by the 'bhogī school' is not exactly true, since, as we shall see, he did approve of the principle of *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa* of the 'yogī school', and, the *madhura-rasa* in his theory is not fully comparable to the mundane *śṛṅgāra-rasa* favored by the 'bhogī school'. His own classification of spiritual emotions transcends both *bhoga* and *yoga*, it is far above all the mundane *rasas*, and above *śānta-rasa* as well. Rūpa Gosvāmī's goal is spiritual, but not in the common negativistic sense of the word; he introduces the spiritual variety of relationships with the Lord which really begin after liberation from *samsāra*. That is why

²¹⁶ Some scholars see the reason for this in the fact that Rūpa Gosvāmī's ancestors were from the south, or the fact that the southern understanding was quite widespread in Bengal where Rūpa Gosvāmī was educated. He, however, shows a high degree of familiarity with many previous theorists, openly criticizes Viśvanātha Kavirāja, often speaks in favor of Bharata, acknowledges *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa* of the northern school, knows of the details of classifications by even minor theorists and lists them at the end of chapters in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, discusses their opinions in the *Nāṭaka-candrikā* and so on.

²¹⁷ Haberman 2003, Introduction, p. xlvii.

ultimately all mundane theories of aesthetic experience, whether they favor *śānta* or *śṛṅgāra*, fall short in trying to account for the expressions of religious devotion.

Some parts of both the southern and the northern way of understanding the *rasas* have been picked up and used by Rūpa Gosvāmī in his own work. This chapter discusses the writings of the Kashmirian philosopher Abhinavagupta, and the relation of his work to the theory of *bhakti-rasa*. The difference can most easily be summed up in relation to how the two authors use the word '*alaukika*'. Abhinavagupta treats artistic, aesthetic relish of drama by the connoisseurs as removed from the ego-covered consciousness of everyday life, and therefore compares such depersonalized empathy to the ecstatic spiritual experience of *brahmāsvāda*, calling it *alaukika* or 'above the ordinary ways of the world'.

Rūpa Gosvāmī, however, although acknowledging the helpful effect of depersonalization in one's empathy for the feelings of others, is eager to help his audience transcend the limits of mundane life and mundane drama as well, opening for them the windows to the spiritual reality far more engaging and joyful than any ordinary worldly, even artistic experience, even much more wholesome than mere tasting of *brahmāsvāda*.

Similar to the monopoly of *advaita-vedānta* in the philosophical circles, which flourishes at the expense of many valid *Vaiṣṇava* interpretations of *vedāntic* thought, the field of Indian aesthetics has come to be dominated with the understanding of *rasa* as propounded by Abhinavagupta. Here also, we need to consider the positive alternatives to his explanations, and Rūpa Gosvāmī has surely produced one of the most articulate and compelling works in religious aesthetics which convincingly argues about the superiority of spiritual emotions to mere *brahmāsvāda*.

'All glory to Him whose form is the essence of all divine emotions!' So begins the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* of Rūpa Gosvāmī. There is a common saying that emotions are the spice of life. Yet much of the religious literature of the world is deeply dubious of the value of emotions, suspicious of whether emotions are to be trusted in ultimate spiritual pursuits. This is certainly true of many of the ascetic teachings of India, wherein emotions are to be renounced as problematic forms of conditioned ignorance that lock one into personal and therefore illusory experience. Emotional agitation is considered to be an enemy threatening the achievement of the ultimate religious goal, defined as utter tranquility. With this in mind, past scholars have often characterized the whole of the religious traditions of Hindu India as involving disciplined spiritual paths that aim to suppress the emotions. This view is limited, however, for besides the emotion-negating philosophies we find in India traditions that, while agreeing that emotions are problematic if left in their ordinary state, go on to maintain that under the right conditions they have the ability to be supremely useful in spiritual life. Within the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* of Rūpa Gosvāmī we encounter a religious strategy entirely different from that of ascetic denial. Here emotions are recognized as

extremely valuable; they potentially comprise the glue that binds one in a loving relationship to God.²¹⁸

Let us study the works of the masterminds of the northern school then, to be able to relate their conclusions to the frame of Rūpa Gosvāmī's thought.

5. 1. 1. *The Works of Abhinavagupta*

Abhinavagupta was a prolific scholar of Kashmir Śaivism, and his life is usually calculated from the dates stated in his works. He probably lived in the second half of the tenth century A.D. in Kashmir²¹⁹. He combined his prodigious talent for learning with the religious asceticism of the Śaiva school, and was soon recognized as the head of the Śaiva sects flourishing in his time. Most of his works focus on the philosophy of monistic Śaivism that has developed into many distinct schools in Kashmir, he himself favoring the *Pratyabhijñā* school. There is a close connection to *advaitic* teachings and to symbolic *tantrism* within his works, and this was probably the reason that has led him into the *advaitically* inspired explanations of the aesthetic experience. Usually his works are divided into three different periods of his interest, first being his interest in the Śaiva-āgamas, second in poetic and aesthetic theory, and the last an abstract philosophical phase where his main works are the commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the two famous works on Śaivism, the *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī*, and the *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*. We are, however, only concerned with his works on poetic and aesthetic theory, more precisely with his commentary on the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, and a commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana.

His commentary to the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, called *Nāṭyaveda-vivṛti*, or popularly, the *Abhinava-bhāratī*, mentions many of the older commentators of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. Right after the famous *rasa-sūtra* (NŚ, 6. 34), Abhinavagupta offers an overview of the previous speculations on *rasa*, partly refutes them and then develops his own. For the sake of easier comprehension of the many theoretical details of the *rasa-siddhānta*, let us first become acquainted with Abhinavagupta's position in a nutshell. Afterwards, we can move through the successive arguments of his predecessors, his refutations of their views, and a detailed statement of his position. Masson and Patwardhan summarize his stances in this way:

Reduced to its bare essential the theory is as follows: watching a play or reading a poem for the sensitive reader (*sahṛdaya*) entails a loss of the sense of present time and space.

²¹⁸ Haberman 2003, Introduction, p. xxix.

²¹⁹ A detailed study of his life and works is available in K. C. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta – An Historical and Philosophical Study* (Varanasi, 2000).

All worldly considerations for the time being cease. Since we are not indifferent (*tatastha*) to what is taking place, our involvement must be of a purer variety than we normally experience. We are not directly and personally involved, so the usual medley of desires and anxieties dissolve. Our hearts respond sympathetically (*hṛdaya-saṁvāda*) but not selfishly. Finally the response becomes total, all-engrossing, and we identify with the situation depicted (*tan-mayī-bhavana*). The ego is transcended, and for the duration of the aesthetic experience, the normal waking 'I' is suspended. Once this actually happens, we suddenly find that our responses are not like anything we have hitherto experienced, for now that all normal emotions are gone, now that the hard knot of 'self-ness' has been untied, we find ourselves in an unprecedented state of mental and emotional calm. The purity of our emotion and the intensity of it take us to a higher level of pleasure than we could know before – we experience sheer undifferentiated bliss (*ānandaika-ghana*). (...) Inadvertently, we have arrived at the same inner terrain as that occupied by the mystic, though our aim was very different from his.²²⁰

This is the sum of Abhinavagupta's explanation of the ecstatic experience. We should keep in mind, however, that he merely compares the two, the aesthetic experience and the yogic trance, and does not fully equate them in his theory. Such a proposition would be stretching the analogy a bit too far. We will discuss the comparison with the *brahmāsvāda* later, let us first move historically through his argument, as found in the *Abhinava-bhāratī*, and summarized in the *Kāvya-prakāśa*²²¹.

First, Abhinavagupta states the opinion of Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa (9th or 10th century, Kashmir) whose commentary is now lost. His theory is that *rasa* is simply a *sthāyī-bhāva* raised to its highest degree by the combined effect of the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas*. *Rasa* is as if 'born' out of this combination, his theory is thus called the *utpatti-vāda*, the theory of the production of *rasa*.

Abhinavagupta then takes us further: the view of Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa was criticized by his contemporary Śaṅkuka (10th century), another Kashmirian commentator. Śaṅkuka's theory is called the *anumiti-vāda*, or the theory of inference. *Rasa* is inferred from the theatrical performance; the public is neither deluded that what they see is not real, nor do they fully believe it is real; the power of poetry and dramatic representation causes them to be able to infer and enjoy the emotional states of the actors who reproduce the original mental states of the dramatic characters.

Because the actors reproduce the original emotions, the *rasa* becomes distinguished from *bhāva* in his theory, and begins to be treated as a separate, special occurrence. Śaṅkuka argues against Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa's position of considering *rasa* a mere

²²⁰ Masson and Patwardhan, pp. vii-viii.

²²¹ Mammaṭa quotes a summary of Abhinavagupta's views as well as the views of his three famous predecessors – Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa, Śaṅkuka and Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka – in his own treatment of *rasa* in the *Kāvya-prakāśa* (KP, 4. 27, 28 *vṛtti*).

intensification of *bhāva*, asking why, if it is so, has Bharata put so much pain in dividing the two and keeping them separate. If the *rasa* is merely an intensification, then, according to Śaṅkuka, we must admit endless levels of intensification in every *rasa*. It also becomes pointless to keep the number of varieties of *hāsa* limited to six, since obviously *rasa* could intensify even further, and could have more varieties than only six. Śaṅkuka sees no ontological difference between *rasa* and *bhāva*, the difference for him lies in how they are apprehended. Only the *rasa*, with the assistance of the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and other ingredients of the aesthetic experience, can be inferred in a theatrical environment, from skilled actors who properly reproduce the emotions. The *bhāva* can never be inferred in the same way, and this makes the difference between the two.

While agreeing with some of his points, Abhinavagupta, on the whole, finds the explanation of Śaṅkuka insufficient. He launches a detailed study of Śaṅkuka's views. Let us enter for a while the world of their philosophical debates.

Abhinava asks, How exactly did Śaṅkuka understand *rasa* as a reproduction –

- 1) from the point of view of the spectators,
- 2) from the point of view of the actor,
- 3) from the point of view of the critics or,
- 4) following the opinion of Bharata Muni?

Abhinavagupta then discusses the weak points of all the four options.

1) In the first case, reproduction can only be something perceived by cognition (*pramāṇenopalabdham*), when one action is understood to be the reproduction of another (like the drinking of milk by someone being understood by the spectators as the reproduction of someone else's drinking of wine). But what precisely in the actor is a reproduction of **feelings** – neither his body, his dress, his glances nor his gestures are identical with a reproduction of a feeling, being altogether of a different basis as the feeling (*bhinnādhikaraṇatvena tato ativailakṣaṇyāt*). The basis of feelings is the mind, while all the above mentioned phenomena rest in the body.

Moreover, reproduction demands a perception of both the original and the copy (*mukhyāmukhyāvalokane*), and yet no one can claim to have ever seen the way Rāma or any other historical personage reproduced on stage exactly expressed his delight and other emotions.

Some might argue that *rasa* is simply a feeling of the actor, perceived by the spectators to be in the form of *rasa*. Abhinavagupta argues that it is then only a feeling, *bhāva*, and not a reproduction of it – why, after all, would delight need to be understood as a reproduction of delight? (*hanta tarhi raty-ākāreṇaiva sā pratipanneti dūre raty-anukaraṇatāvāco-yuktiḥ*)

Someone could say that the *vibhāvas* etc. are real in the represented personage, while they are unreal in the actor. Abhinavagupta agrees that far, but then asks, 'Are they then perceived as unreal by the spectators?' If they were perceived as artificial, how could they lead to the perception of the feeling of delight? If the opposing party argues that precisely because they are perceived as being unreal, the spectators' perception is of a reproduction of delight, Abhinavagupta again has an argument to refute this

direction of thinking. If fog is a reproduction of smoke, and believed to be an indication of fire, it has nothing whatsoever to do with a different reproduction of fire, for example a heap of red roses. The spectator's perception of artificial excitants therefore cannot be a cause of a real perception of delight.

It might be argued that even if the actor is not himself enraged, he still seems to be. Abhinavagupta concedes, 'Yes, he is like someone who is enraged (*kruddhena sadṛśaḥ*).'² But this resemblance, *sādṛśya*, is because of his bodily features, like the contraction of the eyebrows etc. In that, it is not different from a resemblance between a real ox and a member of another ox-like species. No reproduction needs to be involved. And even so, the spectators are not even conscious of this resemblance. All they are aware of during their perception of the actor's mental state is that they also share this same state with him. The theory of reproduction therefore cannot hold.

In connection with the perception of the spectators as explained by Śaṅkuka, Abhinavagupta claims that it is not correct to say that the audience has the perception 'This is Rāma.' Why would it not be simple true cognition if it is without a doubt and if even after the play it is not nullified by a different cognition which would invalidate it? And if it is at some point invalidated, why is it not a false cognition? The fact is, though, that even if no invalidating cognition appears, it will always be a false cognition, as long as we hold on to the theory that the aesthetic experience is an imitation and thus unreal. Śaṅkuka's contention, therefore, that in this experience, there is no contradictory idea and no error (*viruddha-buddhy-asambhedāt*), is untrue.

Furthermore, the same perception of the audience that 'This is Rāma' is had about many actors, and is therefore generalized.

There is also a slight fault in the statement that the determinants can be recognized through the power of poetry. The actor playing Rāma does not connect Sītā with his own life. What happens on the part of the spectators is not the realization of the excitants but rather the realization of the permanent emotion. It is therefore unsound to state that *rasa* is the reproduction of the permanent emotion.

2) The actor also does not feel, 'I am reproducing Rāma or his feeling.' It is not possible to reproduce the feelings of someone whom we have not seen. And even if we understand the word reproduction as after-production (*paścāt-karaṇam*), that would then be true of every action that has ever been done before.

Even if the actor does not feel that he is reproducing a particular historical personage, but feels that he is reproducing the feelings of some noble person (*uttama-prakṛti*), the question remains: By what exactly is this reproduction performed? Is sorrow reproduced by sorrow in the actor? He is not actually sad. It is also not by external signs like tears, for they are of a different nature than sorrow. Is the actor thinking that he is reproducing the *anubhāvas*, indications of the sorrow of a noble person? Then we must decide just which noble person that is. If someone argues that this does not matter, the reply is that it is impossible to call into mind a person without a definite idea about him. And if the explanation is that the actor is reproducing a person who should have wept in the manner that he does, then his own self intervenes, and the relation of the reproduced and the reproducing is lost. The actor also reproduces himself when he cries on stage, and it also cannot be said that Rāma cried like the actor, when it should be just the opposite.

The actor also has no consciousness that he is carrying out a reproduction. The only three causes of his performance are:

- his skill in art (*śikṣāvaśa*)
- his memory of his own determinants (*sva-vibhāva-smaraṇa*)
- the consent of his heart, aroused by the state of generality of feelings (*citta-vṛtti-sādhāraṇī-bhavana hṛdaya-saṁvāda*).

The actor is conscious only of those, and does not think he is reproducing anyone. Reproduction of the actions of Rāma is also different from reproducing the dress and actions of a beloved person.

3) Even from the point of critics who analyze the play on the basis of *vastu-vṛtta*, the nature of things, it is impossible to explain it by reproduction. If one would think that theoretically the play is a reproduction, that is refuted by the fact that the spectators in practice do not conceive of it as such.

4) Bharata Muni also never said, not even indirectly, that *rasa* is a reproduction of the permanent emotion. His descriptions of various dances and songs – which do not imitate anything in real life – prove just the opposite. Bharata did say, *sapta-dvīpānukaraṇam nāṭyam etad bhaviṣyati*, 'Drama is an imitation of anything within the seven islands' (NS, 1. 120), and Abhinavagupta argues that *anukaraṇa* in this case can also have other explanations. He prefers to interpret it as *anukīrtanam*, retelling, or *anuvyavasāya*, re-perception.²²²

It becomes obvious that the laborious theory of Abhinavagupta often had to swim against the current of simpler and more natural explanations. However, by lifting the artistic aesthetic experience out of the worldly sphere and comparing it to ecstatic heights of the contemplators of Brahman, he has made his theory, whether it is ultimately close to the truth or not, attractive to the aesthetic theorists coming after him. After attacking Śaṅkuka, he continues with the arguments in favor of his own theory, now quoting a predecessor called Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka.

Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka was a Kashmiri as well, and probably lived in the first half of the 10th century²²³. His work *Sahṛdaya-darpaṇa* is unfortunately not available today, and we only know about him from the scarce presentations of his views in the *Abhinava-bhāratī* and the *Kāvya-prakāśa*. As far as the understanding of the phenomenon of *rasa* goes, he is the author of the *bhukti-vāda*, the theory of enjoyment, arguing that *rasa* can be neither perceived, produced nor manifested, but is, through the function of *bhāvanā* (revelation), being enjoyed. The main contribution of his theory is the concept of generalization, (*sādhāraṇya*). He is the first in the tradition of aesthetic theorists who compares the aesthetic relish to monistic *brahmāsvāda*. Mammaṭa supplies us his words:

²²² His arguments are summarized from the *Kāvya-prakāśa* – I use the English translation by R. C. Dwivedi, *The Poetic Light – Kāvya-prakāśa of Mammaṭa* (Delhi 1977), and the work of Raniero Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta* (Varanasi 1985).

²²³ He lived before Ānandavardhana, who refutes some of his theories in his *Dhvanyāloka*.

na taṭa-sthena nātmagatatvena rasaḥ pratīyate notpadyate nābhivyajyate api tu kāvyē nāṭye cābhidhāto dvitīyena vibhāvādi-sādhārāṇī-karaṇātmanā bhāvakatva-vyāpāreṇa bhāvyamānaḥ sthāyī sattvodreka-prakāśānanda-maya-saṁvid-viśrānti-satattvena bhogena bhujyata iti bhaṭṭa-nāyakaḥ.

Neither by neutrality (i.e. being related to the actor and the real hero) nor by a reference to one's own self (i.e. the *sahṛdaya*) can *rasa* be perceived, produced or manifested. In poetry and drama, the *sthāyī-bhāva*, made universal (*sādhārāṇī-kṛta*) by the function of revelation (*bhāvakatva-vyāpāra*), different from expression (i.e. denotation or indication), and consisting in the impersonalization of the excitants etc. is then enjoyed by a process of relish (*bhogena bhujyate*) which is of the nature of repose in consciousness, abounding in enlightenment and bliss due to the predominance of *sattva* (*sattvodreka-prakāśānanda-maya-saṁvid-viśrānti*)²²⁴. Such is the opinion of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka.²²⁵

Abhinavagupta, in his *Abhinava-bhārati*, describes the *bhukti-vāda* of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka in the following way:

bhaṭṭa-nāyakas tv āha. raso na pratīyate, notpadyate, nābhivyajyate.

But Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka asserts, 'Rasa is neither perceived, nor produced, nor manifested.' He gives the following arguments why:

- 1) If it were perceived by the spectators as indeed existing within themselves, then the experience of *karuṇa-rasa* would involve actual pain.
- 2) From the viewpoint of the spectators, *Sītā* does not play the role of an excitant in their lives, nor does the view of *Sītā* on stage bring to memory of the spectators their own beloved persons.
- 3) Since the deities are superhuman, the state of generality cannot be aroused in the spectators at the sight of the deeds of the deities.
- 4) The same is true for uncommon enterprises such as the crossing of the sea.
- 5) What occurs in the spectators is also not a memory of *Rāma*, since they have never seen him.
- 6) And even if it be said that *Rāma* is perceived through the medium of *śabda* or *anumāna*, why would *rasa* occur in the audience through inference, if it isn't aroused by direct perception? At the direct perception of love, the onlookers are not in the state of relishing *rasa*, but fall prey to conflicting feelings and judgments.
- 7) And if we say that *rasa* is present in the third party, not exactly in the spectators, then they themselves would necessarily have to be indifferent.

Therefore, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka concludes, it is not possible to suppose that *rasa* can be perceived, be it a direct experience or a memory. The same arguments apply also in the case of believing *rasa* to be produced. Moreover, if it is considered that *rasa* preexists in a potential form (*śakti-rūpatvena*) from which it later manifests, then it must be so

²²⁴ We have seen Viśvanātha Kavirāja use these same words to describe the experience of *rasa*, in his *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 2.

²²⁵ This is a short version of the view of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka supplied by Mammaṭa in his *Kāvya-prakāśa*, after *kārikā* 4. 28, Dwivedi's translation, pp. 68-9.

that the excitants reveal it little by little. This is the same problem as the explanation of the phenomenon of *sphoṭa*. Besides, the same arguments put forward before recur: is *rasa* manifested in our own self or only in the third party?

Therefore, the view of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka is as follows:

tasmāt kāvye doṣābhāva-guṇālaṅkāra-mayatva-lakṣaṇena, nāṭye catur-vidhābhīnaya-rūpeṇa niviḍa-nija-moha-saṁkaṭatā-nivāraṇa-kāriṇā vibhāvādi-sādhāraṇī-karaṇātmanā-abhidhāto dvitīyenāmśena bhāvakatva-vyāpāreṇa bhāvyamāno raso 'nubhava-smṛtyādi-vilakṣaṇena rajas-tamo 'nuvedha-vaicitrya-balād druti-vistāra-vikāśātmanā sattvodreka-prakāśānanda-maya-nija-saṁvid-viśrānti-lakṣaṇena para-brahmāsvāda-savidhena bhogena paraṁ bhujyate iti.

Rasa is revealed (*bhāvyamāna*) by a special power assumed by words in poetry and drama, the power of revelation (*bhāvanā*) – to be distinguished from the power of denotation (*abhidhā*) – consisting of the action of generalizing the excitants etc. This power (i. e. the *bhāvakatva-vyāpāra*) has the faculty of suppressing the thick layer of mental stupor (*moha*) occupying our own consciousness. In poetry it is characterized by the absence of blemishes (*doṣas*) and the presence of qualities (*guṇas*) and poetic figures (*alāṅkāras*). In drama it is characterized by the four kinds of representation (*abhīnaya*). *Rasa*, revealed by this power, is then enjoyed through a kind of enjoyment (*bhoga* *bhujyate*) different from direct experience, memory etc. This enjoyment, by virtue of the different forms of contact between *sattva*, *rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ*, is consisting of the states of fluidity (*druti*), enlargement (*vistara*) and expansion (*vikāśa*). It is characterized by a repose (*viśrānti*) in one's own consciousness (*saṁvit*), which due to the emergent state of *sattva* (*sattvodrekāt*) is pervaded by beatitude (*ānanda*) and light (*prakāśa*), and is similar to the tasting of the supreme Brahman (*para-brahmāsvāda*).²²⁶

After thus summarizing the theory of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, Abhinavagupta states his own view. He accepts the concept of generalization developed by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, but criticizes his idea that the aesthetic experience is a fruition or an enjoyment rather than knowledge, rejecting also Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's explanation involving the *bhāvakatva-vyāpāra*. Maṁmaṭa gives the following summary of his view:

loke pramadādibhiḥ kāraṇādibhiḥ sthāyy anumāno 'bhyāsa-ṣaṭavavatām kāvye nāṭye ca tair eva kāraṇatvādi-parihāreṇa vibhāvanādi-vyāpāravattvād alaukika-vibhāvādi-śabda-vyavahāryair mamaivaite śātror evaite taṭasthasyaivaite, na mamaite na śātror evaite na taṭasthasyaivaite iti sambandhi-viśeṣa-svikāra-parihāra-niyamānadhyaśāyāt sādharmaṇyena pratītaḥ abhivyaktaḥ sāmājikanām vāsanātmatayā sthitaḥ sthāyī ratyādiko niyata-pramāṭṛ-gatatvena sthito 'pi sādharmaṇyopāya-balāt tat-kāla-vigalita-parimita-pramāṭṛtāvaśonmiṣita vedyāntara-samparka-śūnya-parimita-bhāvena pramāṭṛa sakala-sahjādaya-saṁvāda-bhājā sādharmaṇyena svākāra ivābhīno 'pi gocarī-kṛtāḥ carvyamānataika-prāṇo vibhāvādi-jīvitāvadhiḥ pānaka-rasa-nyāyena carvyamāṇa pura

²²⁶ Gnoli, pp. 10, 43-48.

eva parisphuran hṛdayam iva praviśan sarvāṅginam ivāliṅgan anyat sarvam iva tirodadhat brahma-svādam ivānubhāvayan alaukika-camatkāra-kārī śṛṅgārādiko rasaḥ.

In common life, the men of taste are possessed of proficiency by repeated observation in inferring the *sthāyi-bhāva* through women and the like, i.e. through causes etc. In poetry and drama the same causes etc. are designated by the words excitants etc., by giving up their causality etc., and because of possessing the pervading function (*vibhāvanādi-vyāpāra*). The excitants etc. are cognized in their universal aspect on account of non-apprehension of the rule of acceptance or rejection of a particular relation (*sambandhi-viśeṣa-svikāra-parihāra*) as illustrated in the following:

'These indeed are mine, these indeed are of the opponent, these indeed are of the neutral, these indeed are not mine, these indeed are not of the opponent, these indeed are not of the neutral.'

Thus apprehended the *sthāyi-bhāva*, love etc. is situated in the spectator in the form of impression (*vāsanā*). Although it exists as belonging to the particular connoisseur (*niyata-pramāṭṛ-gatatvena sthito 'pi*), on account of the power of universalizing process (*sādhāraṇyopāya-balāt*) the *rasa*, though non-different as one's own self, is yet experienced universally by the connoisseur, sharing the correspondence of heart (i. e. aesthetic sensibility, *saṁvāda*) with all in whom becomes manifest a state of limitlessness free from the contact of any other object of cognition (*vedyāntara-samparka-śūnya-parimita-bhāvena*) arising from the immediate cessation of the limited character of a cognizer (*tat-kāla-vigalita-parimita-pramāṭṛtāvaśonmiṣṭa*).

Having relish as its supreme essence (*carvyamāṇataika-prāṇaḥ*), having its life coeval with excitants etc. (*vibhāvādi-jīvitāvadhiḥ*), being enjoyed as a delicious beverage (*pānaka-rasa-nyāyena carvyamāṇaḥ*), throbbing, as it were, in front, penetrating as if into the innermost heart, embracing, as it were, the entire being, overpowering, as if everything else, producing an experience akin to the taste of ultimate reality (*Brahman*) and effecting an extraordinary charm – such is the *rasa*, *śṛṅgāra* etc.²²⁷

In the *Abhinava-bhāratī*, Abhinavagupta explains his views in the following words. First of all, he claims that his opinion agrees with Bharata Muni and that he is stating nothing new. He quotes Bharata's words that emotions are called *bhāvas* because they make us feel the aims of poetry: *kāvyaṛthān bhāvayantīti bhāvāḥ*. And the aim of poetry is the experience of *rasa*. He then refers to Vedic statements and explains the concept of *bhāvanā*, propulsion, which makes a person transfer the meaning of the statement into something applicable to his own self. Something similar, Abhinavagupta claims, happens in poetry and drama, where the first literal meaning is also transferred to another. In a qualified person, he says, occurs a perception transcending the actual words of the poem (*kāvyaṛmakād api śabdād adhikāriṇo 'dhikāsti pratipattiḥ*).

²²⁷ Dwivedi, pp. 69-73.

An *adhikārī* is a person whose heart possesses the spotless power of intuition (*pratibhāna*). When such a person hears a piece of poetry, after the perception of the literal sense, there appears in his mind another perception, made up of a direct experience (*sākṣāt-kāra*) which eliminates the temporal and spatial distinctions. The *adhikārī* is therefore removed from both the time and place described in the poem and the time-place conditions of the actor.

What the *adhikārī* experiences is solely *rasa*, and it is a cognition by a form of perception without obstacles, entering the heart. In this experience, the self is neither immersed (*tiraskṛta*), as in the mystical experience, nor emerging (*ullukhita*) as during ordinary cognition.

This form of consciousness without obstacles is also called *camatkāra*. The mental state is also transferred to the body, and the bodily states are thus also a form of *camatkāra*. *Camatkāra* is an immersion in enjoyment which has no satiation or interruption (*tr̥pti-vyatiरेकेṇāchinnaḥ*).

Whether one considers *rasa* to be a mental cognition (*mānasādhyavasāya*) consisting of: a) direct experience, or b) imagination (*saṁkalpa*), or c) remembrance, though not ordinary, the fact remains that it is a form of perception, characterized by the presence of a generalized emotion, which is being tasted or enjoyed. Stated plainly, *rasa* is simply and solely a mental state which is realized through a special kind of perception without obstacles and consisting in a relish (*sarvathā rasanātmaka-vīta-vighna-pratīti-grāhyo bhāva eva rasaḥ*).

Abhinavagupta adds that in some sense the previous theories can be accepted as well – the aesthetic experience does consist of a state of intensification, as Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa would say, but in the sense that it becomes unlimited by time and space. It is also a reproduction, as Śaṅkuka would say, in the sense that it involves a repetition of feelings. This concludes Abhinavagupta's treatment of the *rasa* experience in the commentary to the *rasa-sūtra* of Bharata Muni.

5. 1. 2. *Alaukika* – What Does It Mean?

All being said, we are not interested in the hair-splitting details of such interpretations, but will focus on one aspect of Abhinavagupta's theory. His comparison of aesthetic relish with the joy of *brahmāsvāda* has a few implications. First, *śānta-rasa* becomes the highest objective and the goal where all distinctions of the mundane *rasas* submerge into a unified kind of bliss, tranquility and the experience of the oneness of the *ātmā* and the *Brahman*.

What is the nature of its true relish? It is the following: The nature of the soul is tinged by *utsāha*, *rati*, etc., which are capable of imparting their peculiar tinges to it. It is like a very white thread that shines through the interstices of sparsely threaded jewels. It assumes the forms of all the various feelings like love etc., (which are superimposed on

it), because all these feelings are capable of imparting their tinges to it. Even then (*tathābhāvenāpi*) it shines out (through them), according to the maxim that once this *ātmā* shines (it shines on forever). It is devoid of the entire collection of miseries which consist in (i.e. which result from) turning away (from the *ātmā*). It is identical with the consciousness of the realization of the highest bliss. It takes its effect through the process of generalization in poetry and drama. It makes such a heart (i.e. the heart of the sensitive spectator or reader) the receptacle of an otherworldly bliss by inducing a peculiar kind of introspection (*antar-mukhāvasthā-bheda*).²²⁸

For Abhinavagupta then, mundane *rasas* in worldly life are mere speckles on the white cloth of *śānta*, and the only way to approach *śānta* is not through the actual yogic way of religious asceticism, but merely becoming an expert abstract relisher of drama and poetry. This is obviously quite a twist in philosophy, and even Abhinavagupta occasionally admits that the *brahmāsvāda* and *rasāsvāda* indeed cannot be completely analogous. Masson and Patwardhan have found a passage in the *Abhinava-bhāratī* (l. 285)²²⁹ where Abhinavagupta himself admits that the enjoyment of *rasa* is different from the perception of emotions in real life, as well as from the ecstatic trance of the perfected *yogīs*. He lists the reasons for that difference as: the lack of beauty (in the *rasāsvāda*) caused by the appearance of distractions such as the desire to acquire (what one sees in the performance), the absence of one's active participation (in the occurrences staged before his eyes), the absence of clarity (of the *rasas* in the abstract performance) and because of ultimately being at the mercy of the object of contemplation, which means that upon the completion of the play one remains without a stable circumstance favorable for the enjoyment of *rasa*.²³⁰

In the conclusion of their work, Masson and Patwardhan make a detailed list of similarities and differences between *rasāsvāda* and *brahmāsvāda*, and it is reproduced below. A point to note, however, is that the list is made according to the theory of Abhinavagupta, which may not do full justice to the truth. He says that the aesthetic experience is *alaukika* and *ānandaika-ghana*, but of course just his saying it does not yet make it as such. The list is nevertheless helpful.

Looking back over the many passages quoted from Abhinava, what can we pick out as the main similarities and the main differences between *rasāsvāda* and *brahmāsvāda*?

SIMILARITIES

- 1) There is no pain in drama, for everything is blissful when we attain the state of *rasa*. This is equally true of any higher ecstatic experience.
- 2) During an actual dramatic performance, we forget the self.

²²⁸ Masson and Patwardhan (1969), pp. 142-43.

²²⁹ In Gnoli, this section is on p. 21.

²³⁰ Masson and Patwardhan (1969), p. 162.

- 3) We have no hope of material gain from art. The same is true on the religious level, since to become seriously religious in India generally means abandoning one's wealth.
- 4) Both experiences are *alaukika*.
- 5) Both experiences are *ānandaika-ghana*.
- 6) In both cases, the distance between the subject and the object is removed. Thus Abhinava stressed that *rasa* is not objective.
- 7) Time and space disappear for the duration of the experience. We are not conscious of our surroundings during a drama, or at least we ought not to be, according to Abhinava.
- 8) During both experiences there is total immersion. In the case of *samādhi* there is *vyutthāna*, which could correspond (perhaps forcibly, however) to leaving the theatre and re-entering ordinary life. We have all certainly experienced the curious feeling of being let-down, even of depression, upon leaving a theatre.
- 9) In both cases, special preparation is necessary: music and dance in the theatre, and perhaps one might include *bhajans* and other paraphernalia of *bhakti* in the case of religion.
- 10) In both cases, what appears is not something that is 'created' anew, but something that is 'manifested', or 'suggested'. *Rasa* is not 'produced', it is 'suggested'. So also, the identity of the *ātmā* and *Brahman* is only a question of removing ignorance (i.e. nothing new is to be acquired). In *Vedānta* the term *abhivyakti* is often used for this process, just as both Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta use for the experience of *rasa*.
- 11) In *Vedānta*, *avidyā* is removed by means of *śravaṇa*, *manana* etc. In *rasa-niṣpatti*, Abhinava emphasizes how the *vighnas* must be removed before *rasa* can manifest itself.
- 12) In both cases there is the sense of rest (*viśrānti*), of having reached the goal (cf. the *Vedāntic* expression *kṛta-kṛtya*) beyond which there is nothing to be accomplished.
- 13) In the aesthetic experience, Ānandavardhana (and Abhinavagupta) make light of the 'means' that have brought it about, especially of the *vācya* sense, which is compared to a lamp (Dhv. Ā. 1. 9) which is useful for illuminating objects but which is not the goal of our efforts. Similarly, in *Vedānta*, Śāṅkara speaks of the *upāyas* as being similar to a raft which we leave behind after our destination has been reached.

DIFFERENCES

- 1) The final state in *Vedānta* is almost always described as ineffable (*Gauḍapāda* 3. 47: *svasthaṁ śāntam sanirvāṇam akathyaṁ sukham uttamam*), whereas Ānandavardhana is clear that such an adjective can never be predicated of *dhvani*. Whether Abhinava agreed or not is not evident.
- 2) The *adhikārī* in the case of liberation is much more strictly defined than he is for literature. After all, children are perfectly capable of watching a drama, though they might not take away as much as a qualified adult. *Sahṛdayatva* is a much more worldly and concrete qualification than is *mumukṣā*.
- 3) The drama is not expected (at least Abhinava never says anything about it) to change one's life radically. To have a profound aesthetic experience is simply satisfying and does not imply that one will be in any sense profoundly altered. One cannot say the same for mystic experiences. Quite apart from the concept of *sadyo-mukti*, any

deep religious experience is very likely to make a manifest, sometimes drastic, change in a person's outward life.

4) It is significant that most writers (Abhinava is an exception), do not use the term *ānanda* to describe the purpose of poetry as often as they use the less ethereal term *prīti* and even more often *vinoda*, 'entertainment'.

5) With the exception of Abhinava (who has highly 'spiritual' ideas about love) most writers regard the highest expression of drama to be mundane *śṛṅgāra*, without any philosophical implications.²³¹

Masson and Patwardhan notice that in spite of these differences between the two phenomena, Abhinava's articulations of the heightened, inflated purity and bliss of the aesthetic experience became acceptable to many later theorists. For example, in the *Alaṅkāra-mahodadhī* of Narendraprabha Sūri we read: "Aesthetic experience is that state wherein the mind sinks for a moment, where it bathes with ambrosia for a moment, where it gets drunk for a moment, where it melts away for a moment."²³²

There is also an example of glorification of poetry, putting it above wealth or even above *brahmāsvāda*, in the *Prasanna-rāghava* of Jayadeva: "Neither the knowledge of Brahman nor the wealth of a king can be compared to poetry. Like a daughter married to an uncommonly worthy man, it creates joy in the heart when it is appreciated by an exceptional person."²³³

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī also applied his intuition to the relation between the two²³⁴, in his *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*. His philosophy is an admixture of the superiority of *bhakti* and *advaitic* ideas, but on this point he clearly favors the actual deep spiritual experiences as opposed to mere mundane aesthetic relish. He says that whereas Brahman is *sat* (existence) and *ajñāta* (unknown by ordinary people), worldly objects like a beautiful woman etc., are knowable (*meṃ*) by means of valid knowledge. But a beautiful woman as presented in literary works appears to the *sahṛdaya* in the form of pure consciousness (*caitanya*) limited by the *upādhi*, a beautiful woman. The covering mantle disappears for a moment (*māyā-vṛtti-tirodhāne*, paraphrased in the commentary as *vyāvaraṇa-tirodhāne*), because the mind of the *sahṛdaya*, stabilized in *sattva-guṇa*, becomes for a moment identified with pure consciousness²³⁵. But because it is after all worldly objects (*viśaya*) that are perceived under the form of the highest bliss (*paramānanda-rūpa-viśayopādānāt*) and because the perception of the true nature of pure consciousness is impossible due to its being

²³¹ Masson and Patwardhan (1969), pp. 161-164.

²³² *majjati kṣaṇam cetah snāti sudhāyā kṣaṇam / mādyati kṣaṇam yatra viliyate iva kṣaṇam*. Quoted in Masson and Patwardhan (1969), p. 164.

²³³ *na brahma-vidyā na ca rāja-lakṣmī tathā yatheyam kavita kavīnām / lokottare puṁsi niveśyamānā putrīva harṣam hṛdaye karoti*. *Prasanna-rāghava*, *Prastāvanā* verse 23, quoted in Masson Patwardhan, p. 160.

²³⁴ I roughly follow the interpretation and the translation of Masson and Patwardhan (1969), pp. 159-60.

²³⁵ Is this really what happens, I wonder?

limited by worldly objects (*tad-avacchinna-caitanya-svarūpa*), there is neither immediate release (*mukti*), nor is this literary, aesthetic kind of enlightenment (*prakāśa*) eternal, as it is supposed to be in its spiritual variety. Therefore, he concludes,

*atas tad-āvirbhāvitvaṁ manasi pratipadyate
kiñcin nyūnāṁ ca rasatām yāti jāḍya-vimīśraṇāt*

Therefore, when this (consciousness limited by worldly objects) becomes manifest in the mind, it turns into *rasa*, although owing to its being mixed with mundane qualities it is somewhat less (than the joy of pure consciousness). (BR, 1. 13)

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's point in his *Bhakti-rasāyana* is that actually, only pure *bhakti*, a pure relationship with God, justly deserves to be called '*alaukika*'. Simply witnessing a dramatic performance is, first of all, not a permanent state of existence, and very soon the audience returns to their normal limited states of consciousness. More than that, even the drama itself does not deal with transcendent topics but is usually limited to the first three *puruṣārthas*. The relishing of *rasas* in such a theatre is then not fully transcendent and is still tied to this world. That is why Rūpa Gosvāmī is so strict about the purity of *bhakti* (as we have seen in its definition) and the purity of themes in the theatre, if it is to be instrumental in helping the audience experience pure *bhakti-rasāsvāda*.

Another implication of Abhinavagupta's theory is that above *śānta-rasa*, no more relationships or *rasas* are possible. That is why Abhinavagupta has no real place for *bhakti* in his theory. He includes it as the *abhyanantara-aṅga* of *śānta-rasa*, its accessory, just as Śaṅkarācārya includes *bhakti* as a mere means in his own theory of attaining *mukti*.

There are only these nine *rasas*, because only they deserve to be taught, as they are useful to the four goals of life or are exceptionally pleasant. Therefore, what others say, namely that this restriction on numbers is because only these nine are well-known to enlightened literary critics, though other *rasas* are possible, has been refuted. This will be explained in the chapter on the *bhāvas*. It is wrong to say that affection (*sneha*), with a *sthāyi-bhāva* of being moved (*ādratā*) can be a *rasa*, because affection is nothing other than attachment, and attachment culminates in *rati*, *utsāha*, (or some other such accepted *sthāyi-bhāva*). For instance, the love of a child for its mother and father terminates in (i.e. can be included under) 'fear'. The affection of a young man for his friends terminates in *rati*. The affection, as of Lakṣmaṇa, etc., for his brother terminates in (i.e. can be included under) *dharma-vīra*. The same is true of the affection of an old man for his son, etc. The so-called *rasa* of 'greed' (*lauḷyam*) with the *sthāyi-bhāva* of 'greediness' (*gardha*) can be refuted in the same manner, because it will

terminate in some other *sthāyi-bhāva* such as *hāsa* or *rati*. The same holds true of *bhakti*.²³⁶

But in Rūpa Gosvāmī's theory, *śānta-rasa* is the spiritual threshold at the entrance into the spiritual existence. The *jīvas* retain their individuality and emotional setup, which becomes purified to the point of shining, white-hot purity through active *bhakti-yoga*.

Abhinavagupta, Masson and Patwardhan conclude, was a genius of transplanting his own *advaitic* spiritual goals into the field of aesthetic experience.

We have seen some of the advantages that Abhinava's philosophy provided for literary criticism, all of which derive from his brilliant insights into what lay behind imaginative experiences in literature. Let us now look far more briefly (for they are less important) at some of the disadvantages. The chief danger, it seems to us, is the reductionism of his theories; how all literature becomes reduced to a single experience. A similar criticism has been made of Coleridge: "Coleridge's demand for unification and harmony entailed the conversion of the poetic into something other than the poetic, its subordination to philosophy and ultimately to religion." Perhaps the reason, in Abhinava's case, was that he was not himself a very good poet. (...) Had he been more of a poet, and more interested in the particular, would he have preached quite so reductionist a theory? Abhinava's strength lay in ideas, in conceptual thinking. (...) There is a sense in which Abhinava confuses art and life when he insists on the primacy of *śānta-rasa*. Abhinava's weakest point was that he did not really have any example of a great play where *śānta-rasa* was dominant, to lend credence to his theories. By seeing beyond literature to the universal experience that lies behind it, Abhinava is undermining the autonomy, the uniqueness of literary experience. (...) Religion is not, after all, the same thing as literature, unless we dilute the definition of these two terms into harmlessness. (...) That literature could point nowhere except to itself, must have somehow proved disquieting to Abhinava. He was too religious to allow that literature might be somehow 'useless', a goal in itself. It is significant in this respect that Abhinava shies away from the terms *prīti* 'pleasure', and *vinoda* 'entertainment', to express the purpose of poetry. He prefers the religious word *ānanda*, 'bliss'. By insisting on putting such significance into poetry Abhinava is in danger of making much of the Sanskrit literature top-heavy; one is wary that it simply cannot bear the philosophical burden he places on it.²³⁷

One thing we should certainly guard against is being so enamored with the views of Abhinavagupta to not allow other interpretations of the experience of *rasa* to exist. That has been the case with the fate of *bhakti* as a *rasa* within the works of poetic theorists following Abhinavagupta's position. But, as his own commentary to

²³⁶ Masson and Patwardhan (1969), pp. 119, 143. Some of these points have already been presented in Chapter 3.

²³⁷ Masson and Patwardhan (1969), pp. xv-xvii.

the 'Abdhi-śayana verse' in the *Dhvanyāloka* shows²³⁸, Abhinavagupta was perhaps much less contrary to the idea of the overwhelming and superior position of pure Viṣṇu-*bhakti*, and it is our great misfortune that we do not possess his full literary opus, highlighting his stance on this important issue.

5. 2. Common Points in the Two Theories

Despite the many differences and the dissimilar foundation of the theories of Abhinavagupta and Rūpa Gosvāmī, there are a few points common to both. For example, Rūpa Gosvāmī agrees about the nature of the experience of *rasa* which is essentially one of otherworldly wonder (*alaukika-camatkāra*²³⁹). Rūpa Gosvāmī also openly accepts the theory of *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa* or generalization, a principle so closely identified with the theory of Abhinavagupta. Another comparable concept is that of *vāsanā*, the innate ability to experience *rasa*. Of course, the two systems have their own detailed philosophies behind it. The system of Rūpa Gosvāmī is extremely sensitive to even little diversions from the purity of *śuddhā-bhakti*. The subtle differences between the perfection on the path of *yoga* and on the path of *bhakti*, and differences between the mundane *rasas* and *bhakti-rasas*, as well as differences between mundane and devotional poetry / drama, all need to be emphasized.

5. 2. 1. The Principle of *Sādhāraṇī-karaṇa*

In his theory of *bhakti-rasas*, Rūpa Gosvāmī makes use of the theory of *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa*, but subordinates it to his own devotional goals. Rūpa Gosvāmī seems to have been assigning the principle of *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa* to Bharata himself. This is not impossible, considering that the many parts, commentaries and entire longer versions of the *Nāṭya-śāstra* have been irretrievably lost. Nowadays, all we have is a similar verse in the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* (3. 9-10), delineating the same principle of generalization, and the concept is usually attributed to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, although his full work is also lost.

alaukikyā prakṛtyeyam sudurūhā rasa-sthitiḥ
yatra sādhāraṇatayā bhāvāḥ sādhu sphuranty amī
eṣāṃ sva-para-sambandha- niyamānirṇayo hi yaḥ

²³⁸ Quoted in Chapter 3, under Ānandavardhana.

²³⁹ While both call the experience *alaukika*, at least in Rūpa Gosvāmī's theory the *alaukika* nature of the *rasa* experience of Abhinavagupta is still counted as this-worldly, and only pure *bhakti-rasas* reach over *mukti*.

sādhāraṇyaṁ tad evoktam bhāvānām pūrva-sūribhiḥ
 tad uktam śrī bharatena –
 śaktir asti vibhāvādeḥ kāpi sādharmaṇīkṛtau
 pramātā tad-abhedena svayaṁ yayā pratipadyate iti²⁴⁰
 duḥkhādayaḥ sphuranto 'pi jātu svīyatayā hṛdi
 prauḍhānanda-camatkāra- carvaṇām eva tanvate
 parāśrayatayāpy ete jātu bhāntaḥ sukhādayaḥ
 hṛdaye paramānanda- sandoham upacinvate

Because of its extraordinary nature, the state of *rasa*, wherein all the aesthetic components clearly appear as generalized, is extremely difficult to understand. Ancient sages have defined the generalization of the aesthetic components as the disregard of the sense of 'my' and 'another'. Śrī Bharata has said: In generalized actions there is a special power of the excitants and other aesthetic components by which the experiencer comprehends them as his own. In aesthetic experience, even if one sometimes experiences a sorrow that appears to relate to one's self, the wonder of concentrated joy is still experienced. Also, the abundance of supreme joy increases when happy emotions appear in the heart, although sometimes they seem to belong to another. (BRS, 2. 5. 101-105)

Viśvanātha Cakravartī in his commentary to this part of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* further explains a generalized emotional experience: in the depersonalization of the aesthetic components, they can neither be considered to belong to oneself nor to another, but remain abstract inducers of aesthetic responses. He quotes another verse from the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*: *parasya na parasyeti mameti na mameti ca*.²⁴¹

Rūpa Gosvāmī strongly argues about the *alaukika* nature of the experience of *bhakti-rasa*, not per se, but because of its *alaukika* foundation in attachment to the Supreme Lord.

alaukikī tv iyaṁ kṛṣṇa- ratiḥ sarvābhutādbhutā
 yoge rasa-viśeṣatvaṁ gacchanty eva hari-priye
 tat-rāpi vallavādhīsa- nandanāmbanā ratiḥ
 sāndrānanda-camatkāra- paramāvadhir iṣyate
 yat-sukhaugha-lavāgastyāḥ pibatya eva sva-tejasā
 rameśa-mādhurī-sākṣāt- kārānandābhim apy alam
 paramānanda-tādātmyād ratyāder asya vastutaḥ
 rasasya sva-prakāśatvam akhaṇḍatvaṁ ca sidhyati

²⁴⁰ Two *kārikās* from the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* is extremely similar: *vyāpāro 'sti vibhāvāder nāmnā sādharmaṇī- kṛtiḥ / tat-prabhāvena yasyāsan pāthodhi-plavanādayaḥ / pramātā tad-abhedena svātmānam pratipadyate*. (SD, 3. 9-10)

²⁴¹ That is a quotation from the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 12.

Love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is most uncommon, the wonder of all wonders, and attains the highest *rasa* in contact with His devotees.²⁴²

The love which has the son of Nanda as its object rises to the highest peak of most intense bliss.

One drop of happiness in love with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by its power, drinks up the ocean of happiness embodied in the husband of Rukmīṇī, just as Agastya Muni drank the ocean to assist the *devatās*.

Because such love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the other elements of devotional aesthetic experience are non-different from the highest bliss, the *rasa* is understood to be self-revealing and indivisible.²⁴³

Another verse of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* corresponds to a similar statement in the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*:

sad-bhāvaś ced vibhāvādeḥ kiñcin mātrasya jāyate
sadyaś catuṣṭayākṣepāt pūrṇatāivopapadyate

If a true emotion (*sad-bhāva*) is born from only slight exposure to one of the aesthetic components, then it will proceed to the full state of *rasa* from the immediate supplementation of the other four aesthetic components. (BRS, 2. 5. 106)²⁴⁴

Rūpa Gosvāmī readily agreed with the articulations of the previous theorists about the extraordinary, otherworldly and wonderful nature of *rasa*, but had a much more sound foundation for such statements due to the ‘really’ *alaukika* nature of the connection of the *jīvātma* to the Supreme Lord, *sac-cid-ānanda-svarūpa*. We have already seen that in his theory of *bhakti-rasa*, he equates *bhāva* and *prema* with the rays of the *hlādinī-śakti* of the Lord, which descend from the spiritual existence into the heart of a qualified devotee, or, to be precise, had always been latent there but were revived through the purifying process of *sādhana-bhakti*. Such devotionally inspired emotional experiences in relation to the Lord are much more convincingly called *alaukika* than mere depersonalized enjoyment of worldly poetry. Worldly poetry does not change us and does not instill *vairāgya* in us in any permanent way, if at all. Theories which make the mundane aesthetic experience seem higher and purer than it actually is are probably attempts of those attracted to poetry to show that they are no less advanced than a successful transcendentalist. Real spiritual

²⁴² Both Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī emphasize that the *alaukika* nature of this love means that it is above the love for the mundane demigods, who are counted as still belonging to the *laukika* sphere, and even above the love one could experience in relation to other *avatāras* of Kṛṣṇa.

²⁴³ Jīva Gosvāmī explains this highest bliss as the *hlādinī-śakti* of the Lord, and writes that since Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the excitant of this love, there is a oneness between the aesthetic components and the highest joy they produce, just as there is a oneness between *śakti* and *śaktimān*.

²⁴⁴ *sad bhāvaś ced vibhāvāder dvayor ekasya vā bhavet / jhaṭity anya samākṣepe tadā doṣo na vidyate* (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 17)

advancement, however, is not vague and it can be discerned through the so many graded effects on individual consciousness, all categorized in the mapping of the progressive theory of *bhakti-rasa*.

5. 2. 2. The Principle of Latent *Vāsanās*

The most important point of the theory of *bhakti-rasa* is that the *vāsanās* of Kṛṣṇa-*rati* are not readily available in everyone's heart but have to be cultivated through *sādhana* or received as a grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (or His devotees). Since the first is more often the case, Rūpa Gosvāmī prescribes the way of attaining *bhāva* or *rati* gradually through association of saints, acts of worship, etc. This theory of the *sthāyī* as being something to be attained by a conscious effort – although it can be there from previous exposure to *bhakti* – is an understandable innovation in Rūpa Gosvāmī's system.

*sāadhanābhiniveśena kṛṣṇa-tad-bhaktayoḥ tathā
prasādenāti-dhanyānām bhāvo dvedhābhijāyate
ādyas tu prāyikas tatra dvitīyo viralodayaḥ*

This loving emotion (*bhāva*) is born in two ways: either from diligent dedication to *sādhana*, or for the very fortunate, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa or his devotees. The first, however, is more common, the second is rare. (BRS, 1. 3. 6)

Premā can be of two kinds, according to its cause:

*bhāvottho 'tiprasādotthaḥ śrī-harer iti sā dvidhā
bhāva evāntaraṅgānām aṅgānām anusevayā
ārūḍhaḥ paramotkarṣaṁ bhāvotthaḥ parikīrtitaḥ*

Prema-bhakti is of two types: that originating from a *bhāva*, and that originating from the extraordinary grace of Śrī Hari. When *bhāva* is raised to the highest state by performing inner and outer practices, and becomes known as *premā*, it is specifically called '*premā* originating from *bhāva*'. (BRS, 1. 4. 4,5)

The standard outline of achievement of *premā* according to Rūpa Gosvāmī is as follows:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttir syād tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*

In the beginning there must be faith (*śraddhā*). Then one becomes interested in associating with the devotees (*sādhū-saṅga*). Thereafter one is initiated by the spiritual master and begins to practice regulated *sādhana-bhakti* (*bhajana-kriyā*). Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits (*anartha-nivṛtti*) and becomes firmly fixed in devotion (*niṣṭhā*). Thereafter, one develops a preliminary taste for serving the Lord (*ruci*), and later, spontaneous attachment to Him (*āśakti*). Gradually emotions intensify (*bhāva*), and finally there is an awakening of love (*premā*). (BRS, 1. 4. 5-6)

The question of qualification appears naturally and Rūpa Gosvāmī answers,

prāktany ādhunikī cāsti yasya sad-bhakti-bhāvanā
 eṣa bhakti-rasāsvādas tasyaiva hṛdi jāyate
 bhakti-nirdhūta-doṣāṇām prasannojjvala-cetasām
 śrī-bhāgavata-raktānām rasikāsaṅga-raṅginām
 jīvanī-bhūta-govinda- pāda-bhakti-sukha-śriyām
 premāntaraṅga-bhūtāni kṛtyāny evānutiṣṭhatām
 bhaktānām hṛdi rājantī saṁskāra-yugalojjvalā
 ratir ānanda-rūpaiva nīyamāna tu rasyatām
 kṛṣṇādibhir vibhāvādyair gatair anubhavādhvani
 prauḍhānanda-camatkāra- kāṣṭhām āpadyate parām

A taste for the *rasa* of devotion appears only in the heart of one who has an unconscious impression of true devotion that may come from both a past life or this life.

This devotional love resides in the hearts of those devotees whose impurities have been washed away by devotion, whose minds are joyful and pure, who are fond of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and who enjoy the company of likeminded sensitive devotees.

Such devotees live only for the pleasure of devotion to the lotus feet of Govinda, and perform acts conducive to *premā*.

This love in the form of bliss (*ānanda*), which exists in the hearts of the devotees as the manifestation of past and present unconscious devotional impressions, develops into the state of *rasa*.

In the course of encountering the excitants – Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his intimate companions – as well as the other aesthetic components, this devotional love approaches the highest limit of bliss and wonder.« (BRS, 2. 1. 6-10)²⁴⁵

Bhakti-rasa, due to being *alaukika*, cannot develop by mere individual effort, but can only be received from others who possess it. It spreads contagiously from a devotee to another devotee, and its descent into any heart is ultimately the mercy of the Lord and His associates.

²⁴⁵ Rūpa Gosvāmī's theory is close to the traditional terms employed by other poetic theorists: in the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* (3. 3) the words *kaiścit pramāṭṛbhiḥ* are explained in the *ṛtti* as '*prāktana-puṇya-śālibhiḥ*'. And *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* 3. 9 states: *na jāyate tad-āsvādo vinā ratyādi-vāsanām*. The *ṛtti* specifies: *vāsanā cedānīmtanī prāktanī ca rasāsvāda-hetuḥ*.

5.3. The Locus of Rasa in the Two Theories

Rūpa Gosvāmī, after dealing with the *vāsanās* of the devotional experience of *rasa*, touches on the point of the locus of *rasa*, a point much discussed in mundane aesthetic theory. In the classical theory, three possible loci of *rasa* appear: the *anukārya* or the original hero of the drama, the *anukartā* or the *naṭa*, the actor, and the *sāmājika*, a member of the audience who is able to experience the *rasas* presented on stage. The northern school admits the appearance of *rasa* only in the *sāmājika*, while the southern school generally admits it in any person who has the proper aesthetic sensibility. Some have argued that the actor can never become immersed in the emotions he is representing to such an extent that he would himself experience *rasa* as well. Viśvanātha Kavirāja has added that even the actor, if he is poetically sensitive, could be the locus of *rasa*, and thus the position of the northern school was refined to include the *sāmājika* and the actor, but still excluded the *anukārya* from the experience. Rūpa Gosvāmī acknowledges some of these speculations, but argues that *bhakti-rasa* is altogether a different matter.

ratiḥ sthitānukāryeṣu laukikatvādi-hetubhiḥ
rasaḥ syān neti nāṭya-jñā yad āhur yuktam eva tat
alaukikī tv iyaṁ kṛṣṇa- ratiḥ sarvadbhūtādbhūtā
yoge rasa-viśeṣatvaṁ gacchanty eva hari-priye

The knowers of drama are of the opinion that love (the foundational emotion) situated in the original characters by ordinary causes cannot become *rasa*. What they say is correct. However, the extraordinary love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-rati*), which is the wonder of all wonders, does proceed to a special *rasa* for the beloved devotees of Hari in contact with Him. (BRS, 2. 5. 107-8)

Again, we can turn to the *Prīti Sandarbha* of Jīva Gosvāmī for a detailed discussion on the locus of *rasa*. Side by side with the polemics of the theorists about the characters in which *rasa* manifests, he discusses the possibility of the appearance of *bhakti-rasa*, and cites scriptural references to prove its spiritual (*alaukika*) nature.

Anuccheda III. (...) evaṁ vibhāvādi-saṁyogena bhagavat-prīti-mayo raso vyaktibhavati. tatra laukika-nāṭya-rasa-vidāṁ api pakṣa-catuṣkam. rasasya mukhyayā vṛttyanukārye prācīne nāyaka eva vṛttiḥ. naṭe tūpacārād ity ekaḥ pakṣaḥ. pūrvatra laukikatvāt pārimityād bhayādi-sāntarāyatvāc cānukartari naṭa eva dvitīyaḥ. tasya śikṣā-mātreṇa śūnya-cittatayaiva tad-anukartṛtvāt sāmājikeṣv eveti tṛtīyaḥ. yadi ca dvitīye sacetas tv ayaṁ tadobhayatrāpi katham na syād iti caturtha iti.

In this way, being augmented with the *vibhāvas* and other elements of the devotional aesthetic experience, the *bhagavat-prīti-maya-rasa* becomes manifest. In this matter,

the mundane aesthetic theorists have four opinions [about the locus of *rasa*]. The first opinion is that *rasa* is only experienced by the original hero, and his emotions are then only imitated by the actor [meaning that the actor cannot experience the *rasa*]. The second opinion is that actually the hero does not experience the actual *rasa*, because for him, it is an ordinary limited worldly experience that he is going through, characterized by hindrances such as fear. But the actor experiences the abstract emotion, *rasa*, devoid of any hindrances, and is therefore the actual locus of *rasa*. The third opinion is that the actor, simply having practiced how to imitate feelings and doing it mindlessly on stage, is not exactly the locus of *rasa*. The *rasa* is experienced only by the *sāmājikas*, the audience. The fourth opinion is that in case the actor is sensitive, he can also experience *rasa*, and so the *rasa* resides in the perceptive actors and in the perceptive members of the public.

śrī-bhāgavatānām tu sarvatraiva tat-prītimaya-rasa-svīkāraḥ. laukikatvādi-hetor abhāvāt. tatrāpi viśeṣato 'nukāryeṣu tat-parikareṣu yeṣāṃ nityam eva hṛdayam adhyārūḍhaḥ pūrṇo raso 'nukartrādiṣu sañcarati. tatra bhagavat-prīter alaukikatvam aparimitatvaṃ ca svata eva siddham. na tu laukika-raty-ādivat kāvya-kl̥ptam. tac ca svarūpa-nirūpaṇe sthāpitam. bhayādy-anavacchedyatvaṃ śrī-prahlādāu śrī-vraja-devī-ādau ca vyaktam. janmāntarāvyavacchedyatvaṃ śrī-vṛtra-gajendrādau dṛṣṭam. śrī-bharatādau vā. kiṃ bahunā brahmānandādy-anavacchedyatvaṃ api śrī-śukādau prasiddham. evaṃ tat-kāraṇādeś cālaukikatvaṃ jñeyam. tatrālbana-kāraṇasya śrī-bhagavato 'samordhvātiśayi-bhagavattvād eva siddham. tat-parikarasya ca tat-tulyatvād eva. tac ca śruti-purāṇādi-dundubhi-ghoṣitam.

But the devotees of Bhagavān accept only the *bhagavat-prīti-maya-rasa* in all circumstances. This *rasa* is not effected by mundane causes. Therefore, the *bhagavat-prīti-maya-rasa* eternally exists in the original heroes, the *nitya-parikaras* of the Lord. Upon their identification with the *parikaras*, it also appears in the hearts of the *anukartās*, the practicing devotees. The spiritual (*alaukika*) and unlimited (*aparimita*) nature of this *bhagavat-prīti* is eternally established in its own perfection (*svataḥ eva siddhaḥ*). It is not, like the *laukika rasas*, created by poetry. It is intrinsically part of the *svarūpa* [of the Lord and His associates]. It is clear from examples like Prahlāda and the Vraja-gopīs that it can never be interrupted by fear and other hindrances. The examples of Vṛtrāsura and Gajendra testify that it is not hindered even by transition into another body. Mahārāja Bharata is another example. Even more, it cannot be shaken even by the experience of *brahmānanda*, as is evidenced in the life of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī and others. Its causes and so on, therefore, should be understood to be extraordinary, spiritual (*alaukika*). The Lord is the *ālbana-vibhāva*, and His incomparable, supreme Lordship is complete and perfect. His associates are similar in nature to Him. That is being celebrated in the *śrutis*, *Purāṇas* and by the *dundubhi* drums.

Jīva Gosvāmī argues that the *uddīpanas* and the other aesthetic causes of *bhakti-rasa* are all extraordinary due to being the attributes and actions of the Lord and His eternal associates. He cites the example of the four Kumāras, who were ecstatically

affected in mind and body upon coming in contact with such extraordinary *uddīpanas*:

*tasyāravinda-nayanasya padāravinda-
kiñjalka-miśra-tulasī-makaranda-vāyuḥ
antar-gataḥ sva-vivareṇa cakāra teṣāṃ
saṃkṣobham akṣara-juṣāṃ api citta-tanvoḥ*

When the breeze carrying the aroma of tulasī leaves from the toes of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead entered the nostrils of those sages, they experienced a change both in body and in mind, even though they were attached to the impersonal Brahman understanding. (Bhāg. 3. 15. 43)

Another example of the extraordinary, all-attractive nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is quoted from the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

*vividha-gopa-caraneṣu vidagdho veṇu-vādya urudhā nija-sikṣāḥ
tava sutaḥ sati yadādhara-bimbe datta-veṇur anayat svara-jātīḥ
savanaśas tad upadhārya sureśāḥ śakra-śarva-parameṣṭhi-purogāḥ
kavaya ānata-kandhara-cittāḥ kaśmalaṃ yayur anīścita-tattvāḥ*

O pious mother Yaśodā, your son, who is expert in all the arts of herding cows, has invented many new styles of flute-playing. When He takes His flute to His *bimba*-red lips and sends forth the tones of the harmonic scale in variegated melodies, Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and other chief demigods become confused upon hearing the sound. Although they are the most learned authorities, they cannot ascertain the essence of that music, and thus they bow down their heads and hearts. (Bhāg. 10. 35. 15)

Jīva Gosvāmī adds that even stray newcomers who meet with these extraordinary *uddīpanas* will be devotionally aroused because all the paraphernalia of the Lord is made up of His spiritual, divine potencies.

*prāvṛt-śriyaṃ ca tāṃ vikṣya sarva-kāla-sukhāvahāṃ
bhagavān pūjayāṃ cakre ātma-śakty-upabṛmhitāṃ*

Thus observing the beauty and opulence of Vṛndāvana's rainy season, a perennial source of great happiness, the Lord offered all respect to that season, which was expanded from His own internal potency (*ātma-śakty-upabṛmhitam*). (Bhāg. 10. 20. 31)

The effects in the form of *anubhāvas* are extraordinary as well, and appear even in non-moving entities, what to speak of the sentient beings fully attracted to the Lord.

*gā gopakair anu-vanaṃ nayator udāra
veṇu-svanaiḥ kala-padais tanu-bhṛtsu sakhyah
aspandanāṃ gati-matāṃ pulakas taruṇāṃ*

My dear friends, as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pass through the forest with Their cowherd friends, leading Their cows, They carry ropes to bind the cows' rear legs at the time of milking. When Lord Kṛṣṇa plays on His flute, the sweet music causes the moving living entities to become stunned and the nonmoving trees to tremble with ecstasy. These things are certainly very wonderful. (Bhāg. 10. 21. 19)

In the same way, the accessories in the form of *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* are extraordinary as well – some, like the mental states of utmost affectedness caused by *vaicittya* and *vipralambha*, being extremely rare in the world are certainly examples of such *alaukika* nature, while in a certain sense all of them can be understood as extraordinary, because of their connection with the Lord. Jīva Gosvāmī quotes the *Brahma-saṁhitā*,

*śriyaḥ kāntāḥ kāntaḥ parama-puruṣaḥ kalpa-taravo
drumā bhūmiś cintāmaṇi-gaṇa-mayi toyam amṛtam
kathā gānam nāṭyam gamanam api varṇśi priya-sakhi
cid-ānandaṁ jyotiḥ param api tad āsvādyam api ca*

*sa yatra kṣīrābdhiḥ sravati surabhībhyaś ca su-mahān
nimeṣārdhākhyo vā vrajati na hi yatrāpi samayaḥ
bhaje śvetadvīpaṁ tam aham iha golokam iti yaṁ
vidantas te santaḥ kṣiti-virala-cārāḥ katipaye*

I worship that transcendental seat, known as Śvetadvīpa where as loving consorts the Lakṣmīs in their unalloyed spiritual essence render loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa as the only object of their affection; where every tree is a transcendental purpose tree; where the soil is the purpose gem, all water is nectar, every word is a song, every step is a dance, the flute is the favorite attendant, effulgence is full of transcendental bliss and the supreme spiritual entities are all enjoyable and tasty, where numberless milk cows always emit transcendental oceans of milk; where there is eternal existence of transcendental time, who is ever present and without past or future and hence is not subject to the quality of passing away even for the space of half a moment. That realm is known as Goloka only to a very few self-realized souls in this world. (BS, 5. 56-7)

He comments that *gānam* (song) and *nāṭyam* (drama) mentioned in these verses are the mediums for the manifestation of *rasa*. He then touches the point of the so-called *alaukika* experience in mundane poetry. He says,

*kiṁ ca svābhāvikālaukikatve sati yathā laukika-rasa-vidāṁ laukikebhyo 'pi kāvya-
saṁśrayād alaukika-śaktiṁ dadhānebhya vibhāvādy-ākhyāprāpta-kāraṇādibhyaḥ śokādāv
api sukham eva jāyate iti rasatvāpattis tathaivāsmābhir viyogādāv api mantavyam. tatra*

*bahis tadiya-viyoga-maya-duḥkhe 'pi paramānanda-ghanasya bhagavatas tad-bhāvasya ca
hṛdi sphūrtir vidyata eva.*

Even though all aesthetic elements are naturally extraordinary and spiritual in *bhagavat-prīti-maya-rasa*, the mundane poetic theorists consider that by the power of poetry, ordinary aesthetic elements also come to possess an extraordinary power and become designated as *vibhāvas* and so on. They are thus instrumental in manifesting the mundane *rasa* which is also believed by these theorists to be extraordinary due to the fact that even in the experience of sorrowful *rasas* there is a certain happiness. We also accept that position in relation to conditions in separation and so on. What may externally be a state of unhappiness due to separation from the Lord, is accompanied by a manifestation of a great quantity of bliss in the heart, stemming from one's relation to the Lord and the emotions one cherishes for Him.

Jīva Gosvāmī asserts that both the Lord and emotions for Him cannot ever leave their intrinsic nature of being a great quantity of supreme bliss. Even though separation may seem painful, its inherent happiness is nourished with the unbroken connection with the Lord and the hope of future reunion. Jīva Gosvāmī now discusses the possibility of experiencing *rasa* in the different categories of characters.

Rasa residing in the *anukārya*, the original hero who is imitated in dramatic works, according to Jīva Gosvāmī refers to the eternal associates of the Lord who are naturally in the most perfect situation for experiencing the *bhakti-rasas*. The associates of the Lord blessed with His presence are most easily affected and respond to Him in a devotional relationship. The relationship through seeing is always superior to the relationship through merely hearing about someone, although in the case of Śrī Kṛṣṇa both are extraordinary. An example of the direct contact is given, from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

*śruta-mātro 'pi yaḥ strīṇāṁ prasahyākarṣate manah
uru-gāyuru-gīto vā paśyantīnāṁ ca kiṁ punaḥ*

The Lord, whom countless songs glorify in countless ways, forcibly attracts the minds of all women who simply hear about Him. What to speak, then, of those women who see Him directly? (*Bhāg.* 10. 90. 26)

Another verse from the *Bhāgavata* demonstrates the overwhelming nature of the indirect contact with the Supreme Lord, merely through hearing about Him.

*tava vikrīḍitaṁ kṛṣṇa nṛṇāṁ parama-maṅgalam
karṇa-pīyūṣam āsādy tyajanty anya-sprhāṁ janāḥ*

Uddhava said, 'Dear Kṛṣṇa, Your pastimes are supremely auspicious for mankind and are an intoxicating beverage for the ears. Tasting such pastimes, people forget their desires for other things.' (*Bhāg.* 11. 6. 44)

The second category, the *anukartā* of the mundane aesthetic theory (which is the imitator, the actor on stage) is in Jīva Gosvāmī's classification a *sādhaka* devotee of the Lord, not one of the eternal associates. He imitates the actions and emotions of the eternal associates and thus qualifies for the experience of *bhakti-rasa*. Others, the outsiders, who may have no interest in such imitation are of course excluded from the experience. In such an imitation, the emotions experienced are felt to be of the original associates, not exactly one's own.

The *sāmājika*, a perceptive member of the audience in the classical theory, is in Jīva Gosvāmī's theory also understood to be a sensitive devotee. Jīva Gosvāmī adds that according to mundane aesthetic theory, the *sāmājika* is the common experiencer of *rasa* in a dramatic performance. The experience can be extended to include the experience of *rasa* in a poetic work as well. In the theory of *bhakti-rasas*, such *rasa*-inspiring poetry and drama may be valuable for those whose *rati* has merely sprouted (*raty-aṅkuravatām eva*), while for those who are always energized by *premā*, even a slight remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa may make the *bhakti-rasa* bloom in their hearts. An example is given of the sage Nārada:

*svara-brahmaṇi nirbhāta- hṛṣikeśa-padāmbuje
akhaṇḍam cittam āveśya lokān anucaran munih*

Nārada Muni devoted his mind fully to the lotus feet of the Lord who is manifest in spiritual sound and in such consciousness he traveled around the worlds. (*Bhāg.* 6. 5. 22)

Jīva Gosvāmī continues with a division of the devotees – they are either eternal associates who have the direct association of Kṛṣṇa, or those practicing devotees who have the desire or a conceit of being His associates. In the case of the first, the experience of *rasa* for them is perfect in itself. For the second category, however, two ways of experiencing the *bhakti-rasa* exist: either by hearing about the activities of the Lord with His eternal associates, or by individually hearing about the Lord's sweetness. In the first case, the emotions of the eternal associates may be the same as those of the aspiring devotee, and by the process of generalization he enjoys them as *bhakti-rasa*. In the case that the emotions of the particular eternal associate of the Lord that he hears about are not the same as his own emotions, then the hearing will only act as an *uddīpana* of a general kind of attraction for the Lord, and will not cause his specific *bhakti-rasa* to blossom. By individually hearing about the Lord's sweetness, however, the particular *bhakti-rasa* of the aspiring devotee is manifested, from his own particular emotional foundation of *bhagavat-prīti*, augmented by the proper *vibhāvas* and so on.

The *anuccheda* continues with elaborations about the *alaukika* nature of the *vibhāvas* and so on, which we have already discussed. We thus conclude the treatment of the locus of *rasa* in the *Prīti Sandarbha*.

The two aesthetic theories, that of Abhinavagupta and his followers on the one side, and that of the *Gauḍīya ācāryas* headed by Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmī on the other side, have obviously been built using different axioms and convictions about perfection, and they both adjust the existing classical aesthetic theory to their own ends.

As far as the mundane enjoyment of poetry goes, the *Gauḍīya ācāryas* do not deal with the matter in any detail. *Bhakti-rasa* exists in its own separate world, and appears with the assistance of its own extraordinary causes and accessories. Only when and if the mundane poetic theorists, on the basis of their theories of the enjoyment of *rasa*, seem to encroach upon the sacred space of *bhakti-rasa*, denying its validity and wholesomeness, do the *ācāryas* become alarmed and begin to defend the supreme, spiritual position of *bhakti-rasa*.

The situation is similar in the seemingly constant combat of the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* with the monistic interpreters of the final goal of life. The *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* also acknowledges the existence of *śānta-bhaktas*, it is a valid stage in spiritual progress, but it cannot be considered the ultimate perfection. When *śānta* is superimposed on *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, making it seem that the supreme spiritual variety of relationships is a mere trivial show of mundane qualities and forms, the *Gauḍīya ācāryas* stand up and defend the ultimate perfection of the variegated *bhakti-rasas* in relation to the eternally perfect Supreme Lord.

In the step-by-step advancement of a simple-minded *sādhaka*, these philosophical distinctions may not play a very great role. The initial stages of spiritual purification are more or less the same for the monist and the personalist spiritual seekers, and often delving into emotional perfections of the eternal associates when one is not yet ready may remain covered with one's mundane understanding, not giving any spiritual impetus to the *sādhaka* at all. Only on higher levels where the budding relationship with the Lord begins to unfold in the heart of the *sādhaka*, can he begin to appreciate the rich tradition of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* with its outstanding articulation of supreme perfections in emotional bonds with the Supreme Lord.

❧ *Chapter Six* ❧

*Alternative Expressions
of the Experience of Bhakti*

In the overview of classical poetic theories in Chapter 3, two theorists have not been mentioned, Kavi Karṇapūra and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Their respective theories give ample place to the phenomenon of *bhakti-rasa*, therefore they are studied in a more detailed manner in this chapter. Both were approximate contemporaries of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and have been influenced by his philosophy of *bhakti-rasa*. The first, Kavi Karṇapūra, was the son of one of Mahāprabhu's close associates, Śivānanda Sena, and was a prolific writer. His views on *bhakti-rasa* are expressed within his poetic compendium called the *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is more generally known as an *advaitist* philosopher, but his theological-aesthetic treatise, the *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*, combines monistic notions with the philosophy of the *Vaiṣṇava* theologians. Both works will be considered below.

6. 1. The *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* of Kavi Karṇapūra

6. 1. 1. Kavi Karṇapūra

Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra, a poetic genius and son of the famous Śivānanda Sena²⁴⁶, has compiled a work on literary and aesthetic theory, the *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*. His other writings include the drama *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*, and the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, the first resembling the dramatic works of Rūpa Gosvāmī, and the second being an enlargement of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*. His famous poetic creation is a *campū* on *Vṛndāvana-līlā*, called the *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū*. Some ascribe the work *Caitanya-carita*, or *Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya*, to his elder brother Caitanya Dāsa, while some consider Kavi Karṇapūra the author of that work as well²⁴⁷.

The year of his birth is usually calculated as 1524 or 1526 A. D., in Kāñcanapallī in Nadiyā (West Bengal), close to the village of Kumārahaṭṭa which was the original

²⁴⁶ Śivānanda Sena was a close associate of Śrī Caitanya who annually lead the devotees of Bengal to visit Śrī Caitanya in Jagannātha Purī at the time of the *Ratha-yātrā*. Practically all biographical works on the life of Śrī Caitanya refer to the family of Śivānanda Sena, and some even give the details of his three sons (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi, 10. 26).

²⁴⁷ A full list of his works traditionally attributed to him is: *Caitanya-caritāmṛta-mahākāvya*, *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū*, *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*, *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*, *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, *Ārya-śataka*, *Kṛṣṇāhnikā-kaumudī*, a commentary on the tenth canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Caitanya-sahasra-nāma* and *Keśavāṣṭaka*. The date of the completion of the *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka* is given as 1576, and it was composed on the wish of the king of Purī, Mahārāja Pratāparudra, a follower of Śrī Caitanya.

home of Śivānanda's family²⁴⁸. His childhood name was Paramānanda Dāsa or Purī Dāsa, given to him even before his birth by Mahāprabhu²⁴⁹. When he, at the age of seven, amazed the whole assembly of devotees headed by Śrī Caitanya with a perfect Sanskrit verse composed by himself, he earned for himself an honorific title Kavi Karṇapūra, 'the poet who fills the ears of the audience with his mellifluous poetry'. The verse is included in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya, 16. 74):

śravasoh kuvalayam akṣṇor añjanam
 uraso mahendra-maṇi-dāma
 vṛndāvana-ramaṇīnām maṇḍanam
 akhilaṁ harir jayati

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is just like a bluish lotus flower for the ears of the gopī damsels of Vṛndāvana, He is the black ointment for their eyes and a necklace of indranila gems on their chests. Let that Lord Śrī Hari, the decoration of the gopīs, be glorified.

While being roughly contemporary to the Gosvāmīs in Vṛndāvana, Kavi Karṇapūra stayed at a considerable distance from them, in native Bengal, and the sharing of ideas might not have been so extensive. Although he acknowledges the towering position of the Gosvāmīs in the *sampradāya*, and shows full respect towards Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, in his own work on poetic theory he approaches the issue of *bhakti-rasa* in a slightly innovative way²⁵⁰. Since he tries to combine the purpose of a regular poetic treatise and establishing the reality of *bhagavad-bhakti-rasa* in the same work, his approach to the issue is necessarily an exercise in spiritual sharp-mindedness. For example, he considers *prema*- and *bhakti-rasas* as being separate from the mundane *śṛṅgāra*, and cleverly submerges the infamous *devādi-viṣayā-rati* in his own theory.

²⁴⁸ Kāñcanapalli seems to have been their second home, only a few miles away. The priest of the family of Śivānanda Sena, and the personal guru of Kavi Karṇapūra, Śrīnātha Paṇḍita, established the worship of a Deity of Kṛṣṇarāya in Kāñcanapalli. The Deity is still being worshipped there, and the temple was enlarged in the 18th century.

²⁴⁹ I would suspect he was named after an elderly associate of Mahāprabhu called Paramānanda Purī, since otherwise the descriptions in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* make little sense: Mahāprabhu orders the father to name his next son Purī Dāsa, and when the boy is born, they name him Paramānanda Dāsa, 'as per the wish of Śrī Caitanya'. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya 12. 49)

²⁵⁰ To surmise that he did not know of Rūpa Gosvāmī's work is against the evidence in his *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka*, where he mentions Rūpa Gosvāmī and his writings in most glowing terms. At the same time, one of the verses of Kavi Karṇapūra is quoted in the *Padyāvalī* of Rūpa Gosvāmī, which leaves us wondering when exactly in his long and fruitful writing career Kavi Karṇapūra composed the *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*. Jīva Gosvāmī, who was the youngest of the Gosvāmīs, about ten years older than Kavi Karṇapūra, quotes from his *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* in the commentary to *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

6. 1. 2. The Definition of Kāvya in the Alaṅkāra-kaustubha

The *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* (The Gem of Poetic Ornaments on the Chest of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) is divided into ten chapters, called *kiraṇas* or rays. Kavi Karnaṇpūra accepts the speculations of the northern school of poetic theorists on the main element of poetry, *dhvani* (suggestion). The theorists before him have been eager to prove the superexcellent nature of *dhvani* and have postulated a threefold division of poetry:

- *uttama-kāvya*, the highest type of poetry where the *dhvani* shines supreme
- *madhyama-kāvya* where the *dhvani* is subordinated
- *adhama* or *avara-kāvya*, where mere *śabda*- and *arthālaṅkāras* embellish the work

Kavi Karnaṇpūra intuitively refines that categorization, by adding *uttamottama-kāvya* above them all, a *kāvya* which is simultaneously beautified by poetic figures and has a predominance of *dhvani*, or is composed in such a way that one *dhvani* leads into another.²⁵¹

uttamaṁ dhvani-vaiśiṣṭye madhyame tatra madhyamam
avaram tatra niṣpanda iti trividham āditaḥ
dhvaner dhvany-antarodgāre tad eva hy uttamottamam
śabdārthayoś ca vaicitrye hi yātaḥ pūrva-pūrvatām

The highest kind of *kāvya* (*uttama*) is embellished with special manifestations of *dhvani*, while the middling kind (*madhyama*) has no such special manifestations. The dull poetry without any *dhvani* is of the third grade (*avara*). However, when one *dhvani* is born from another *dhvani*, that is called *uttamottama-kāvya*, superexcellent poetry. Moreover, whenever there is a rich display of diversity in *śabda*- and *artha*-*alaṅkāras*, the poetry is upgraded for one step in each case. (AK, 1. 6-7)²⁵²

His example of the *uttamottama-kāvya*, where the *dhvani* is beautified with other poetic figures, is as follows:

nava-jala-dhara-dhāmā koṭi-kāmāvatāraḥ
praṇaya-rasa-yaśoraḥ śrī-yaśodā-kiśoraḥ
aruṇad aruṇa-dīrghāpaṅga-bhaṅgyā kuraṅgīr
iva nikhila-kṛśāṅgī raṅgiṇi tvaṁ kva yāsi

The young lad of Yaśodā bestows the glory of affectionate *rasas* to those related to Him. He is the incarnation of a million of Cupids, and His effulgence resembles fresh

²⁵¹ This smart innovation is copied by Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha in his *Rasa-gaṅgādhara*.

²⁵² I use the edition prepared by R. S. Nagar, with the commentaries of Lokanātha Cakravartī and Śiva Prasāda Bhaṭṭācārya. R. S. Nagar (Ed.), *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha of Kavi Karnaṇpūra* (Delhi, 1993).

clouds. With the crooked sidelong glances from His reddish eyes, he is torturing all the ladies who are like female deer, and has completely weakened their bodies. O passionate lady, where are you going?²⁵³

In his *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*, Kavi Karṇapūra draws from the *Kāvya-prakāśa*, *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, *Dhvanyāloka*, *Daśarūpaka* and the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. His intuitive genius leads him to refine the definition of poetry found in the earlier treatises:

The first *kiraṇa* opens with the benedictory verse in which the blessings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are invoked. The author defines poetry as *kavi-vāñ-nirmitiḥ kāvyam* which means that poetry is comprised of a creation made by a poet's speech. Stepping into the shoes of Viśvanātha Kavirāja, the author of the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, he criticizes the definition of poetry given by Mammaṭa, Vāmana and even by Viśvanātha, and in the end establishes the validity of his own definition of poetry. Mammaṭa's definition²⁵⁴ is too wide (*ativyāpta*) on account of the absence of blemishes and the presence of excellences and figures even in expressions like *kuraṅga-nayanā*, 'a lady whose eyes are like those of an antelope', which is strictly speaking not yet poetry. Viśvanātha's definition is *vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam*, and he qualifies it with a statement, *vākyam syād yogyatākāṅkṣāsattiyukto padoccayaḥ*, which means that only full *vākyas*, expressions which comply with the definition of a sentence, can become actual *kāvya*. This then excludes from poetry the known imaginative verses like *kūrma-loma-paṭa-channaḥ śaśa-śṛṅga-dhanur-dharaḥ / eṣa vandhyā-suto yāti kha-puṣpa-kṛta-śekharaḥ*²⁵⁵. Says he, *ity asya vākyatvābhāve 'pi kāvya-darśanāt* 'For we have seen poetry which is not a full sentence'. The sentence *gopibhiḥ saha viharati hariḥ* will be included within the scope of poetry on account of the depiction of feeling of love whereas the status of poetry is denied to such expressions. Hence the definition propounded by Viśvanātha is vitiated by both fallacies of the too wide and too narrow definition (*ativyāpti* and *avyāpti*). Vāmana's definition *rītiḥ ātmā kāvyasya* is also not acceptable for *rīti* is an external appendage and does not form the inner content of poetry.

After the definition of poetry, Kavi Karṇapūra takes up the treatment of the three *vṛttis* (functions) of the word and sense, and studies the theory of *dhvani* in a detailed manner. That is right now not our immediate interest.

²⁵³ On page 17 in the edition of R. S. Nagar.

²⁵⁴ *Kāvya-prakāśa* 1. 4: *tad adoṣau śabdārthau saguṇāv analaṅkṛtī punaḥ kvāpi*, "Poetry consists of words and their meanings, which are without blemishes (*doṣas*), possessed of excellences (*guṇas*), and are, rarely, devoid of poetic figures (*alaṅkāras*)."

²⁵⁵ A rough translation of this comic verse would be, "This son of a barren woman, with a crown of illusory flowers, covered with a blanket made of the hairs of a turtle and holding a bow made of the horns of a rabbit, is leaving."

6. 1. 3. The System of Rasas in the Alaṅkāra-kaustubha

Kavi Kaṇṇapūra touches the subject of *rasas* and *bhāvas* in the fifth *kiraṇa* of his work. V. Raghavan in his work *The Number of Rasas*, summarizes the position of Kavi Kaṇṇapūra on the number of *rasas* in his theory:

Kavi Kaṇṇapūra's *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* is a regular *alaṅkāra* treatise but it introduces some ideas of these *Vaiṣṇava ālaṅkārikas* also [i.e. Rūpa Gosvāmī]. Kavi Kaṇṇapūra does not give us the classification into *mukhya* and *gauṇa* *rasas*, and we miss also *dāsyā-rasa* in his work²⁵⁶. He accepts the eight *rasas* of Bharata, the *śānta* and the *vātsalya*. To these ten he adds two more, *premā* and *bhakti*. *Premā* is the name he gives to the *madhura-rasa*, the divine *śṛṅgāra* between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. He considers *citta-drava* as its *sthāyī*. According to him, this love is not *śṛṅgāra*. He also records the view of some who hold *śṛṅgāra* as the *rasa* between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and says that, in that case, *premā* will be the *aṅga* of that *śṛṅgāra*. But, according to himself, *premā* is the *aṅgī*; *śṛṅgāra*, its *aṅga*. This *premā*, Kavi Kaṇṇapūra considers as Love Supreme within which every other *rasa* comes. This view of *premā* will make it the basic Love which, Bhoja also says, lies at the root, as *mūla-prakṛti*, of *rati* and *prīti*.²⁵⁷

A distinction worth mentioning is that between *bhakti-rasas* and *kāvya-rasas*. While we have seen Rūpa Gosvāmī focus on the five primary *bhakti-rasas* from the point of one's eternal identity, we are here dealing with the whole specter of *rasas* that can be experienced in a poetic work, either by an ordinary *sahṛdaya*, or by a *rasika* devotee. While a devotee is animated by the particular *vibhāvas* in devotional poetry that make him experience the joy of his particular personal relationship with the Lord, he may also experience other *rasas* which are not of his own single *sthāyī-bhāva*, but are present in the heart as less strong *saṁskāras* of previous emotional experiences.

Kavi Kaṇṇapūra makes his system applicable to both devotees and ordinary *sahṛdayas*, by postulating *bhakti* as a separate *rasa* (roughly corresponding to the *prīti* or *dāsyā* of Rūpa Gosvāmī). The experience of this *bhakti-rasa* is immediate, internal in the devotees (Kavi Kaṇṇapūra uses the term *parokṣa*), while it can be experienced indirectly through poetry by the *sahṛdayas* as well, in their case being removed, external (Kavi Kaṇṇapūra uses the term *pratyakṣa*). The other *rasas*, if experienced by devotees, are transcendent, while the ordinary *sahṛdayas* experience their *laukika* variety.

In the *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*, Kavi Kaṇṇapūra follows the previous poetic theorists in pronouncing *rasa* (and *dhvani*) to be the soul of poetry, the soul of the abstract 'kāvya-puruṣa' (and likening *alaṅkāras* to the decorations on the body of the *kāvya*-

²⁵⁶ He includes *prīti* as a subdivision of *rati*, so it is not absent.

²⁵⁷ V. Raghavan (1967), p. 146.

puruṣa). He cites the *rasa-sūtra* of Bharata Muni (NS, 6. 34) as the process of the manifestation of *rasa*.

He then explains the aesthetic components and proceeds to describe the nature of *rasa*.

vibhāvādīnām svarūpam āha –
vibhāvo dvividhaḥ syād ālambanoddīpanākhyayā
ālambanas tad eva syāt sthāyinām āśrayo hi tat
yat tām evoddīpayati tad uddīpanam iṣyate
ebhir eva vyañjakais tu tribhir udrekam āgataiḥ
āsvādāṅkura-kando 'sau bhāvaḥ sthāyī rasāyate

The *vibhāvas* or excitants are twofold, the *ālambanas* and the *uddīpanas*. The *ālambana-vibhāva* is the shelter of the *sthāyi-bhāva*, while that which excites the *sthāyi-bhāva* is called the *uddīpana-vibhāva*. When the three ingredients (*vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhicārīs*²⁵⁸) all appear in a heightened state, they activate the *sthāyī*, which is like a root of the sprout of relish (*āsvādāṅkura-kanda*), to transform into a *rasa*.²⁵⁹ (AK, 5. 62)

The definition of the *sthāyi-bhāva* is given as follows:

āsvādāṅkura-kando 'sti dharma kaścana cetasaḥ
rajas-tamobhyām hīnasya śuddha-sattvatayā sataḥ
sa sthāyī kathyate vijñair vibhāvasya pṛthaktayā
pṛthag-vidhatvam yāty eṣa sāmājikatayā satām

The experts call *sthāyi-bhāva* a particular function of consciousness which is characterized with the quality of *śuddha-sattva*. It is free from the two lower *guṇas* of *tamas* and *rajas*, and it is likened to a root of the sprouts of relish. Due to the variegatedness of the *vibhāvas*, it is manifold, and manifests in the relishers of poetry. (AK, 5. 63)

He lists the many possible *sthāyīs*, first the general eight of Bharata, connected with their respective *rasas*²⁶⁰. In the *vṛtti* following this enumeration, he quotes from the *Kāvya-prakāśa* about the inclusion of *śānta* as the ninth *rasa*, and then turns to Bhoja for a justification of the additional two, *vatsala* and *prema*, with *mamakāra* (possessiveness) and *citta-drava* (melting of consciousness) as their respective *sthāyi-*

²⁵⁸ In the *vṛtti*, he specifies that the *kāraṇas* (*vibhāvas*) and *kāryas* (*anubhāvas*) are not really causes and effects of *rasa*, but that the *vibhāvas* are causes in relation to the *anubhāvas*, while *vyabhicārīs* are the *sahakārīs* of the *anubhāvas*.

²⁵⁹ In the edition I work with, the verses are numbered in a very confusing way. Apparently whole bunches of verses are marked with a single number, while the illustrative verses have no numbers at all. The *devanāgarī* in this work is hardly readable.

²⁶⁰ *śṛṅgāre ratir utsāho vīre syāc choka-vismayau / karuṇādbhutayor hāso hāsye bhītir bhayānake / jugupsā bibhatsa samjñe kopo raudre 'ṣṭa nāṭya-gāḥ.*

*bhāvas*²⁶¹. Bhoja apparently admits them all in both *śravya* and *dṛśya* art, which Kavi Karṇapūra readily accepts²⁶².

He agrees with the theory that *kāvya-rasa* appears only in the *sāmājikas*, and apparently does not admit it in the same form in the original characters and in the actors²⁶³. He then treats *rati* in its variegated forms:

ratiś cetō-rañjakatā sukha-bhogānukūlya-kṛt
sā prīti maitrī sauhārda bhāva-samjñān ca gacchati
yā samprayoga-viśayā sā ratiḥ parikīrtitā
samprayogaḥ strī-puruṣa- vyavahāraḥ satām mataḥ
asamprayoga-viśayā saiva prītir nigadyate
sakhi-patnyām pati-sakhe draupadī kṛṣṇayor tathā

Rati (love) is the emotion that has the capacity of delighting the consciousness (*ceto-rañjakatā*). It creates circumstances favorable for happiness and enjoyment. It has subvarieties such as *prīti*, *maitrī*, *sauhārda* and *bhāva*. Of those, *rati* is the love that has conjugal enjoyment as its object. Conjuality is love between members of the two genders. Non-conjugal love between members of the opposite gender, however, is called *prīti*, like the affection between Kṛṣṇa and Draupadī. (AK, 5. 65)

Kavi Karṇapūra goes on to explain that while *prīti* may shrink at the event of inadvertent touching (which is considered improper for persons of the opposite gender not married to each other), there is no such difficulty in the friendship between members of the same gender, which is called *maitrī*. *Sauhārda* is a similar type of benevolent love that always shines with the same strength. The characteristic of *prīti* is that even when two beloved persons of the opposite gender meet, no changes in body and mind appear which are otherwise visible in conjugal love.

Kavi Karṇapūra now, with great geniality, includes the *devādi-viśayā-rati* in his theory. He reasons that in the case of worshippers of the Lord who is all-pervading and all-powerful, the worshippers cannot relate to him in conjugal *rati*, therefore their *sthāyi-bhāva* is called merely *bhāva*, to distinguish it from other forms of *rati*.

²⁶¹ As was already mentioned in Chapter 3, there is a confusion about the number of *rasas* in Bhoja's voluminous, even contradictory writings. Since Kavi Karṇapūra does not cite the exact place in Bhoja's works where he quotes from, it is hard to say anything conclusive. Wading through the *Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa* and the *Sarasvatī-kañṭhābharaṇa* in search of this particular stand of his would be a demanding task.

²⁶² Many theorists apparently admit *śānta* only in poetry (*śravya-kāvya*) but not in drama (*dṛśya-kāvya*), probably due to the fact that Bharata does not list *śānta*, and because of the word 'nāṭye' in his verse enumerating the standard eight *rasas*.

²⁶³ In his enumeration of the various *rasas*, he does admit it in the original characters, calling the *rasa parokṣa*, 'internal' in the original characters, and *pratyakṣa*, 'external' in the *sāmājikas* who experience it indirectly.

That *bhāva* also possesses the quality *ceto-rañjakatā*, and it matures into *bhakti-rasa*. The word 'ādi' broadens the meaning to *guru* and similar objects of *bhakti*.

When such *bhāva* directed to the Lord achieves the highest state of maturity through repeated *sādhana* like *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, it comes to rest in its ultimate perfection. Its stages of gradual refinement, *rati*, *bhāva*, *pūrvarāga*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *praṇaya*, *prema*, *sneha* and *mahārāga*, are compared to the cooking of molasses.

yathekṣūṇām raso hy āmaḥ pākāt pākāntarair guḍaḥ
guḍo 'pi pākataḥ pāke carama syāt sitopalā
tathā ratir-bhāva-pūrva- rāga-rāgākhyā-pākataḥ
anurāgaḥ sa praṇaya- premabhyaṁ pākam āgataḥ
sneha-pākam atho yāti mahārāgo 'yam ucyate

The raw sugarcane juice is cooked into molasses, and when that is cooked further, it reaches the condition of refined sugar. In the same way, *rati* matures through the stages of *bhāva*, *pūrva-rāga*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *praṇaya*, *prema* and *sneha*, and finally reaches the highest state called *mahārāga*.²⁶⁴

The *mahārāga* is visible in the love of the *gopīs* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, glorified by Uddhava in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10. 47. 59):

kve māḥ striyo vana-carir vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ
kṛṣṇe kva caiṣa paramātmāni rūḍha-bhāvaḥ
nanv īśvaro 'nubhajato 'viduṣo 'pi sākṣāc
chreyas tanoty agada-rāja ivopayuktaḥ

How amazing it is that these simple women who wander about the forest, seemingly spoiled by improper behavior, have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul! Still, it is true that the Supreme Lord Himself awards His blessings even to an ignorant worshiper, just as the best medicine works even when taken by a person ignorant of its ingredients.

Kavi Karṇapūra glorifies such *rūḍha-bhāva* of the *gopīs* as the highest, and proves it with a prayer of Uddhava who hopes to be born in Vraja as a blade of grass, to attain the dust of the lotus feet of the *gopīs*. In the *śāstras*, the same desire is nowhere documented in relation to Rukmiṇī or Lakṣmī.

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajāṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām

²⁶⁴ On page 128 in the edition of R. S. Nagar.

Uddhava said, 'The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the *gopīs* trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet.' (Bhāg. 10. 47. 61)

According to Kavi Karṇapūra, *rasa* is defined as that amazing kind of happiness which overwhelms the functions of external as well as internal organs.

bahir-antaḥ-karaṇayor vyāpārāntara-rodhakam
sva-kāraṇādi-saṁśleṣi camatkāri sukhaṁ rasaḥ
rasasyānanda-dharmatvād aikadhyaṁ bhāva eva hi
upādhi-bhedān nānātvam ratyādaya upādhayaḥ
prākṛtāprākṛtābhāsa- bhedād eṣa tridhā mataḥ

Uniting with its causes and so on, *rasa* is a wonderful kind of happiness that stops the functions of both the external and the internal organs.

Because of the unified blissful nature of *rasa*, its *bhāva* is actually only one. Its variegatedness is seen due to the different limited names of it (the different *sthāyīs* like *rati* etc.)

It is of three kinds, *prākṛta*, *aprākṛta* and *ābhāsa*. (AK, 5. 70-72)

Of the three, *prākṛta* or *laukika* is the mundane variety of *rasas*, and *aprākṛta* refers to the emotions exchanged between spiritual personalities like Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The *ābhāsa* variety appears where there is impropriety involved in any of the ingredients. Kavi Karṇapūra is concerned that the relationship between the *gopīs* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not understood as an example of such impropriety (*anaucitya*), and he quotes from the *Rasa-sudhākara*:

yadyapy ayaṁ rasābhāsaḥ paroḍha-ramaṇi-ratiḥ
tathāpi dhvani-vaiśiṣṭyād uttamaṁ kāvyam eva tat

Although the relationship of the *paroḍhā nāyikā* (*parakīyā*) and the *nāyaka* is usually understood to be a *rasābhāsa* in poetry, by the special effect of *dhvani* it is counted as the highest, *uttama-kāvyā*.²⁶⁵

He then quotes a verse from the *Mahābhārata* (also quoted by Rūpa Gosvāmī in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*): *alaukikāś ca ye bhāvāḥ na tāṁs tarkeṇa yojayet*. 'Such *bhāvas* are supernatural, and one should not try to understand them with mere logic.'²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Quoted on p. 146 in the edition of R. S. Nagar.

²⁶⁶ Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes the version starting with *acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā*, and adds the second line: *prakṛtibhyaḥ paraṁ yac ca tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam*. (BRS, 2. 5. 93)

After this discussion of *alaukika* kinds of *rasa*, he turns back to its *laukika* varieties, and *kāvya* that describes them. He discusses the appearance of *rasa* in the *sāmājika*, audience, and acknowledges the wonderful nature of *rasa*, quoting a verse from the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*.

rase sārāś camatkāro yaṁ vinā na raso rasaḥ
*tac-camatkāra-sāratve sarvatraivādbhuto rasaḥ*²⁶⁷

The essence of *rasa* is wonder (*camatkāra*) and without it, *rasa* is not *rasa*. Because of this essential presence of wonder in every *rasa*, all *rasas* are ultimately *adbhuta-rasa*.

He proceeds to describe all the *rasas* separately. To the eight of Bharata, he adds *śānta*, *vātsalya*, *prema* and *bhakti-rasa*. Of *śānta*, *nirveda* is the *sthāyī*, *saṁsāra-duḥkha* is the *ālambana*, and the *puṇya-tīrthas* are the *uddīpana*. The *anubhāva* is *viśayāsakti-tyāga*. The favorable *vyabhicārīs* are *matī*, *smṛtī*, *dhṛtī* and so on. His opinion is that this *rasa* is *parokṣa* (internal) in the *anukārya*, and *pratyakṣa* (external) in the *sāmājika*. When it is related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is *alaukika*. He illustrates it with the following verse:

vayo jīrṇaṁ hā dhik tad api na hi jīrṇo mada-bharaḥ
ślathaṁ carmāṅgebhyas tad api na rāgaḥ ślatha iva
radāḥ śīrṇās tad api na hi mohah, katham ayam
janaḥ kaṁsārāteś caraṇa-kamalāya sprhayatu

Alas! We are condemned! Our age is worn out, but not the burden of our arrogance. Our limbs and skin have become slackened, but not so our attachments. Our teeth are broken, but not our illusions! How can this be? One should desire the lotus feet of the enemy of Kāṁsa.²⁶⁸

Just as in the case of *śānta*, *nirveda* was raised from the position of a *vyabhicārī* into the position of a *sthāyī*, and has become a *rasa*. Similarly, the *devādi-viśayā-rati* is a *bhāva*, but also becomes a *rasa*, *bhakti-rasa*. He has thus turned the innovations of the northern school about *śānta-rasa* to his own advantage, and has established *bhakti* as a *rasa* as well.

Before dealing with it, he describes *vātsalya* and *prema-rasas*. Of *vātsalya*, *mamakāra* (possessiveness) is the *sthāyī*. It is a one-sided relation. Its *ālambana* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *vibhāvas* are His charming crawling, and the *anubhāvas* are embracing Him and so on. *Vyabhicārīs* like *harṣa* appear. The *rasa* is *parokṣa* in *Vrajeśvarī* *Yaśodā*, and it is *pratyakṣa* in the *sāmājikas*. The illustrative verse is as follows:

²⁶⁷ From the *vṛtti* to *kārikā* 3. 3 of the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*. A statement by a certain Dharmadatta, describing the position of Viśvanātha's great great grandfather Nārāyaṇa. He believed that *rasa* is ultimately only one, *adbhuta*.

²⁶⁸ Page 146 in the edition of R. S. Nagar.

ārāj jānu-karoṇpasarpaṇa-para jāta-smitaṁ sañcarann
 aṅkāroham anāpnuvat rurudiṣā-vimlāna-candrānanaḥ
 abhyāsārtham upekṣito 'pasaraṇa-prakrāntayā satvaram
 kaṇṭhe-kṛtya yaśodayā na na na na nety āśvāsi bālo hariḥ

From afar, baby Hari approaches mother Yaśodā crawling on His hands and knees, with a smile on His face. He tries to climb into her lap, but when unsuccessful, becomes inclined to weep, and His moonlike face becomes withered. As he begins to run away, Yaśodā quickly catches Him and embraces Him to her neck, while saying 'No no no no!' to console Him.²⁶⁹

In *prema-rasa*, the *sthāyī-bhāva* is *citta-drava*. The relationship is two-sided, mutually reciprocal. The *ālambana* in this *rasa* are the two persons for each other, and the *uddīpanas* are the superb virtues of each of them. The *vyabhicārīs* are *matī*, *autsukya* and *such*. This *rasa* is *parokṣa* in Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and *pratyakṣa* in the *sāmājikas*. The illustrative verse is the following:

preyāms te 'haṁ tvam api ca mama preyaṣīti pravādaḥ
 tvam me prāṇā aham api tavāsmīti hanta pralāpaḥ
 tvaṁ me te syām aham iti ca yat tac ca no sādhu rādhe
 vyāhāre nau na hi samucito yuṣmad-asmad-prayogaḥ

O Rādhe! When we say to each other, 'I am Your beloved and You are my beloved', or, 'You are my life, and I am Yours', 'I am in You and You are in Me', in these expressions the words You and I are not used properly [i.e. We are united in love, and are no longer two persons].²⁷⁰

Kavi Karṇapūra adds that some theorists consider the relationship between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to be *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. In that case, he says, *prema* is a part of that *śṛṅgāra*. But in his own theory, he posits *prema-rasa* as the inclusive *rasa*, of which *śṛṅgāra* is but a part. In fact, because all the *rasas* are ultimately part of *prema-rasa*, it is their reservoir and the most important *rasa* of all.

unmajjanti nimajjanti premṇy akhaṇḍa-rasatvataḥ
 sarve rasāś ca bhāvāś ca taraṅgā iva vāridhau

Because *prema* is the fundamental indivisible *rasa*, all other *rasas* and *bhāvas* emerge from it and submerge in it like waves in the ocean.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Page 148.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Page 149.

Apart from *prema*, which seems to be the fundamental *rasa* in Kavi Karṇapūra's system, he treats *bhakti-rasa* separately, as it matures from the *devādi-viṣayā-rati*. It is similar to the *śānta-rasa* or *prīti-rasa* of Rūpa Gosvāmī. In this single *bhakti-rasa*, the *sthāyī* is the *bhāva* previously described as heaving the quality of *ceto-rañjakatā*. The *ālambana* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the *uddīpanas* are His glories and so on. The *anubhāvas* are headed by *citta-drava*, melting of consciousness. The appropriate *vyabhicārīs* are *nirveda*, *dainya* and similar emotions. In the devotees of the Lord, this *rasa* is *parokṣa*, while it is *pratyakṣa* in the *sāmājikas*. The example given is a glorification of the Lord by a devotee:

jaya śrīmad-vṛndāvana-madana! nandātmaja! vibho!
 priyābhīrī-vṛndārika! nikhila-vṛndāraka-maṇe!
 cid-ānanda-syandādhi-padāravindāsava! namo
 namas te govindākhila-bhuvana-kandāya mahate

Glory to the Cupid of Vṛndāvana, the son of Nanda, the Supreme Lord! He who is the jewel of all leaders for the hosts of the *gopīs*! He from whose lotus feet emanates the thick nectar of spiritual bliss! Obeisances, obeisances to You, Govinda, who are like the great root of the whole creation!²⁷²

Faithful to his *Vaiṣṇava* background, Kavi Karṇapūra consistently brings his examples in connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He concludes that although the Lord is the shelter of all possible *rasas*, he is primarily the personification of *śṛṅgāra*. He describes the multifaceted participation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in various *rasas*:

śṛṅgārī rādhikāyām sakhiṣu sakaruṇaḥ kṣveḍa-dagdheṣu aghāher
 bibhatsī tasya garbhe vraja-kula-tanayā-cela-caurye prahāsī
 vīro daityeṣu, raudrī kupitavati turāṣāhi, haiyaṅgavīna-
 steye bhīmān vicitrī nija-mahasi śamī dāma-bandhe sa jīyāt

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a lover to Rādhikā, compassionate to the *sakhas* when they are tortured by the snake Agha, He is disgusted in the snake's belly, a joker while stealing the clothes of the *gopīs*, a hero when fighting with the demons, angry at the wrathful Indra during the Govardhana-līlā, afraid during the stealing of milk products, amazed at his own prowess, and peaceful during the līlā of binding. Let Him be victorious!²⁷³

This is the end of our peeking into *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*, and we turn to Madhusūdana Sarasvatī for a similar treatment of *bhakti-rasa*.

²⁷² On page 150 of the edition of R. S. Nagar.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

6. 2. The Bhakti-rasāyana of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī

6. 2. 1. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī

Another writer who tried to create a working model of the aesthetics of *bhakti-rasa* was Madhusūdana Sarasvatī²⁷⁴, and in this chapter his direction of thinking will be more closely examined. He also lived in the time of Rūpa Gosvāmī and was admittedly influenced by Śrī Caitanya, although another influence, that of *advaita-vāda*, is also discernible in his way of reasoning. His famous work, the *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana* (The Elixir of Devotion to the Lord)²⁷⁵ is – like the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* – at once a theological treatise and a work on the psychology of *rasa*.

Biographical accounts hint at his being extremely attracted to the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava movement ignited by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, and the young Kamalanayana (later to become Madhusūdana Sarasvatī), son of Purandara Bhaṭṭācārya, left his home in Faridpur (East Bengal) to join the Vaiṣṇavas in Navadvīpa, Nadiyā (West Bengal). He, however, missed Śrī Caitanya who has already taken *sannyāsa* and moved to Jagannātha Purī. The young inquisitive student, disappointed, stayed in Navadvīpa for some time, studying *navya-nyāya*, and then resolved to move on to Vārāṇasī. He spent the rest of his life there, studying under different Śāṅkarite *sannyāsīs*²⁷⁶. He was a protégé of Akbar and a friend of Tulasīdāsa Gosvāmī. When the latter completed his *Rāma-carita-mānasa* in the year 1584, and was despondent due to the opposition of the orthodox *brāhmaṇas*²⁷⁷, Madhusūdana consoled him with a verse:

ānanda-kānane hy asmin tulasī jaṅgamas taruḥ
kavitā-mañjarī yasya rāma-bhramara-cumbitā

²⁷⁴ It is difficult to come to any conclusion about his dates, as different scholars have widely differing opinions. His attraction for Mahāprabhu was obviously born at the time when Mahāprabhu was still in this world, up to 1533, while the friendship with Tulasīdāsa would indicate he was still alive in the eighties or nineties of the 16th century. Akbar's reigning time is 1556-1605.

²⁷⁵ Western scholars working on Madhusūdana Sarasvatī are, to my knowledge, Lance Nelson (University of San Diego) and Sanjukta Gupta-Gombrich (University of Oxford). Their works, however, were inaccessible to me here in India. I work with a Hindi translation of the *Bhakti-rasāyana* done by Janardan Shastri Pandey (Varanasi, 1998). A dissertation has been done at BHU, by Devika Majumdar, *Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava Dṛṣṭi mein Bhakti-rasāyana*.

²⁷⁶ His teachers were, Mādhava Sarasvatī on *mīmāṃsā*, Rāma Tīrtha on *Vedānta*, while Viśveśvara Sarasvatī was his *sannyāsa-guru*, who wanted to test him and ordered him to produce a commentary of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Madhusūdana, answering the challenge, promptly wrote the famous *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā*. After accepting *sannyāsa*, he lived in Vārāṇasī, in the Gopāla Mandir at Chausāṭh Ghāṭ, together with Viśveśvara Sarasvatī.

²⁷⁷ Because traditionally, the scriptures should be composed in the pure, refined Sanskrit language, and not in imperfect vernaculars. The *Rāma-carita-mānasa* is written in Avadhī, a dialect of Hindi spoken around Ayodhyā (Awadh, Oudh).

Here in Ānanda-kānana (Vārāṇasī), there is a movable Tulasī tree. The buds of its poetry are kissed by the bumblebee Rāma.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is perhaps most well-known by his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*²⁷⁸, and a melodious verse about Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

vaṁśī-vibhūṣita-karān nava-nīradābhāt
pītāmbarād aruṇa-bimba-phalādharoṣṭhāt
pūrṇendu-sundara-mukhād aravinda-netrāt
kṛṣṇāt paraṁ kim api tattvam aham na jāne

I know of no higher truth than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose hands are decorated with a flute, whose complexion is like that of new clouds, who is dressed in a yellow silk cloth, and whose lips are reddish like the bimba fruit. His face is as beautiful as the full moon, and His eyes resemble lotus flowers.

This charming verse, curiously, appears in one of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's major works on *advaita*, called the *Nyāyāmṛtādvaita-siddhi*, or short, *Advaita-siddhi*. It is a refutation of the *Mādhva* philosophy of *dvaita* (specifically, of the work called *Nyāyāmṛta*, by Vyāsātīrtha). That puts Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in a complicated position. Apparently, his fascination with *bhakti* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa has remained strong despite a considerable difference in the philosophical foundation for it. It will be interesting to see whether his attempt to present *bhakti-rasa* is as philosophically waterproof as that of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs.

6. 2. 2. The *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*

The opening verse of the *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana* was quoted already in Chapter 4, but is here reproduced for easier reference, along with the opening verse of the accompanying *ṭīkā*, also composed by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

nava-rasa-militaṁ vā kevalaṁ vā pum-arthaṁ
paramam iha mukunde bhakti-yogaṁ vadanti
nirupama-sukha-saṁvid-rūpam asprṣṭa-duḥkhaṁ
tam aham akhila-tuṣṭyai śāstra-dṛṣṭyā vyanaajmi

²⁷⁸ A traditional list of his works is as follows: *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā* on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*, *Advaita-siddhi*, *Advaita-rakṣaṇam*, *Ānanda-mandākinī*, *Śaṇḍilya-sūtra-ṭīkā*, *Bhakti-bhāṣya-nirūpaṇam*, *Bhāgavata-vyākhyā*, *Vedānta-kalpa-latikā*, *Siddhānta-bindu*, *Rāsa-pañcādhyāyī-ṭīkā*, and a few more shorter commentaries.

For the pleasure of all, I herein explain *bhakti-yoga*, the path of devotion to Mukunda, according to the view of the *śāstras*. This *bhakti* is declared to be the highest goal of humanity. It consists of the nine different *rasas* or is an independent *rasa* in itself. Its form is incomparable happiness and complete cognizance, untouched by sorrow. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 1)

*pada-nakha-niviṣṭa-mūrtibhir ekādaśatām ivāvahann iṣṭām
yaṁ samupāste giriśas taṁ vande nanda-mandire kañcit*

I bow down to someone in Nanda's palace. Reflected ten times in the nails of His lotus feet, Lord Śiva worships Him, as if in eleven forms.²⁷⁹

The *Bhakti-rasāyana* is divided into three chapters called *ullāsas*. The first *ullāsa* begins with the consideration of the four *puruṣārthas*, and the place of *bhakti* among them. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī gives the basic definition of *bhakti*, *sthāyi-bhāva* and *vāsanās*, and describes the eleven '*bhūmikās*', stages of *bhakti*. In the *dvitīya-ullāsa*, he proceeds to a more specific definition of *bhakti*. He describes the possible *rasas* and the process of the transformation of *sthāyis* into *rasas*. The *ṭṭīya-ullāsa* further discusses the *rasas*, and the accessories in its appearance.

Before discussing the *puruṣārthas*, the work begins with a consideration of the different paths to the Supreme, *karma*, *jñāna* (including *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*) and *bhakti*. In this theme, the influence of *advaita* on Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's thought is most easily discerned. Even though the whole work is undoubtedly devoted to *bhakti-rasa* in title and content, some of the points are nevertheless very similar to *advaitic* doctrines. When the prominence and superexcellence of *bhakti* is compromised with *advaitic* ideas, it obviously begins to differ from the kind of *bhakti* preached by Rūpa Gosvāmī, who painstakingly maintains that *śuddhā-bhakti* is far above the desire and the occurrence of *mokṣa*. What we have in the *Bhakti-rasāyana* is an attempt of an *advaitist* philosopher inclined towards *bhakti* to delve into the mysteries of *bhakti* with his own acquired apparatus of *advaita-vāda*, through which he approaches the verses on *bhakti* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

His treatment of the four *puruṣārthas* and the place of *bhakti* among them is original, for example, he declares that *puruṣārtha* refers to both the goal and the means to it. He defines it as *duḥkhāsaṁsprṣṭa-sukha*, happiness untouched by sorrow (which was mentioned in his first verse of the *Bhakti-rasāyana* as a quality of *bhakti*). It is therefore only one more step further to pronounce *bhakti* as a valid *puruṣārtha*. Those who would not agree, he pacifies that *bhakti* can be seen at least as forming a part of either the first or the last *puruṣārtha*, *dharma* or *mokṣa*. Such a stance makes *bhakti* subservient to worldly *puruṣārthas*, and even its subordination to *mokṣa* is not the happiest solution.

²⁷⁹ The forms of Rudra are eleven. Lord Śiva bows down to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and he is reflected in His ten toenails, thus, together with his own form, we come to the number eleven.

He bases his treatment of qualification for *bhakti* on a series of verses from the Eleventh Canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, where Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the three kinds of *yogas* to Uddhava.

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

*yogās trayo mayā proktā nṛṇāṃ śreyo-vidhimsayā
jñānaṃ karma ca bhaktiś ca nopāyo 'nyo 'sti kutracit
nirviṇṇānāṃ jñāna-yogo nyāsināṃ iha karmasu
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānāṃ karma-yogas tu kāmīnāṃ
yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān
na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-daḥ
tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate
asmil loke vartamānaḥ sva-dharma-stho 'naghaḥ śuciḥ
jñānaṃ viśuddham āpnoti mad-bhaktiṃ vā yadṛcchayā*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa said: My dear Uddhava, because I desire that human beings may achieve perfection, I have presented three paths of advancement – the path of knowledge, the path of work and the path of devotion. Besides these three there is absolutely no other means of elevation.

Among these three paths, *jñāna-yoga*, the path of philosophical speculation, is recommended for those who are disgusted with material life and are thus detached from ordinary, fruitive activities. Those who are not disgusted with material life, having many desires yet to fulfill, should seek perfection through the path of *karma-yoga*.

If somehow or other by good fortune one develops faith in hearing and chanting My glories, such a person, being neither very disgusted with nor attached to material life, should achieve perfection through the path of loving devotion to Me.

As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity and has not awakened his taste for devotion characterized by *śravaṇaṃ kīrtanaṃ viṣṇoḥ* (Bhāg. 7. 5. 23) one has to act according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions.

One who is situated in his prescribed duty, free from sinful activities and cleansed of material contamination, in this very life obtains transcendental knowledge or, by fortune, pure devotion unto Me. (Bhāg. 11. 20. 6-10)

Read superficially, these verses do not seem to put *bhakti* above the other two paths. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī prescribes the path of *jñāna* to those whose minds are not soft, and *bhakti* to those whose minds are soft²⁸⁰. While all men are generally

²⁸⁰ He does, however, a few pages earlier, quote a series of verses from the *Bhāgavata* which speak unanimously about the supremacy of *bhakti*: *tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya yogino vai mad-ātmanaḥ / na jñānaṃ na ca vairāgyaṃ prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha*, "Therefore, for a devotee engaged in My loving service, with mind fixed on Me, the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation is generally not the means of achieving the highest perfection within this world." *yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat / yogena dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair api // sarvaṃ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-*

qualified for *bhakti* in his view, he reserves *jñāna* for those qualified through the four prerequisite *sādhana*s²⁸¹. He also separates them according to their form: *bhakti* is a *savikalpaka-citta-vṛtti* and *jñāna* is a *nirvikalpaka-citta-vṛtti*. It would have been appreciated if there would have been more stress on *bhakti* as the ultimate path recommended to anyone, even the *jñānīs*, as many of the verses in the *Bhagavad-gītā* do²⁸².

For the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas*, however, *śuddhā-bhakti* is the *paribhāṣā* of the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and they do not allow *jñāna*, *yoga* or *karma* to become even nearly as prominent as *bhakti*, at any step. Faith in *bhakti*, as passingly mentioned in the *Bhāgavata* verses above, is extraordinary, obtained only by the mercy of other devotees and the Lord Himself. Only when such faith is attained, can one gain a proper perspective about the other paths, and see their utter inferiority in comparison with pure *bhakti*. For example, a series of famous verses in the prayers of Lord Brahmā to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, after the *Brahma-vimohana-līlā*:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām*

Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, throw away the process of speculative knowledge and with their body, words and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are vibrated by You personally and by Your pure devotees, certainly conquer Your Lordship, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.

*śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave
teṣām asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātīnām*

My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge,

bhakto labhate 'ñjasā / svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathaṁcid yadi vāñchati, "Everything that can be achieved by fruitive activities, penance, knowledge, detachment, mystic yoga, charity, religious duties and all other means of perfecting life is easily achieved by My devotee through loving service unto Me. If somehow or other My devotee desires promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in My abode, he easily achieves such benedictions." (Bhāg. 11. 20. 31-33)

²⁸¹ The four *sādhana*s in *Vedāntic* study are *nityānitya-viveka*, *ihāmutrārthaphala-bhoga-virāga*, *śamādi-ṣaṭka-sampattiḥ* (*śama*, *dama*, *uparati*, *titikṣā*, *śamādhāna*, *śraddhā*), and *mumukṣutva*. (*Vedānta-sāra*, 1. 15)

²⁸² For example, *bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate / vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ* (Bg. 7. 19), or, *kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām avyaktāsakta-cetasām* (Bg. 12.5).

he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result. As a person who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, one who simply speculates cannot achieve self-realization. His only gain is trouble.

*pureha bhūman bahavo 'pi yoginas
tvad-arpitehā nija-karma-labdhayā
vibudhya bhaktyaiva kathopanītayā
prapedire 'ñjo 'cyuta te gatiṁ parām*

O almighty Lord, in the past many yogīs in this world achieved the platform of devotional service by offering all their endeavors unto You and faithfully carrying out their prescribed duties. Through such devotional service, perfected by the processes of hearing and chanting about You, they came to understand You, O infallible one, and could easily surrender to You and achieve Your supreme abode. (Bhāg. 10. 14. 3-5)

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī represents the group of *advaita-sannyāsīs* who are more favorable to the concept of *bhakti* than their *advaitic* background would indicate. It is known that *advaita-vāda* does not outright deny the validity of *bhakti* but just subordinates it to the final *kaivalya*, and makes it a mere means to the end. If one ignores or hides away that ultimate offense to the superiority of *bhakti*, it begins to seem as if we are dealing with the *Gauḍīya* kind of the understanding of *bhakti*. We meet with such a philosophy in the *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā* and the *Bhakti-rasāyana* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Other known personalities of this type would perhaps be Śrīdhara Svāmī, the known commentator of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (although his commentary nowhere seems decidedly *advaitic*), or Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, another *Śāṅkarite sannyāsī* and a contemporary of Madhusūdana, who readily admitted to Śrī Caitanya that his explanation of *bhakti* as superexcellent is much more sound than what passes as Śāṅkara's doctrine. The amazing fact is that even Śāṅkarācārya himself is sometimes understood as a double personality, ultimately favoring *bhakti* to Nārāyaṇa above all else. Even other great *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* may include *advaita* in their philosophies of *bhakti*, for example, Vallabhācārya calls his doctrine *śuddhādvaita*, or pure monism, to counter Śāṅkara's kind of monism that has become *aśuddha* because of allowing *māyā* or *avidyā* to contaminate the ever pure Brahman. Rāmānuja's system is also known as a special brand of *advaita*, qualified monism or *viśiṣṭādvaita*. The distinctions between *advaita* and *bhakti* have been blurred and negotiated for centuries, and the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas*, some would say, are perhaps too sharp in their denigration of all kinds of mixtures of *advaita* and *bhakti*. But it is a fact that only the *Gauḍīya* school, faithful to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, is able to consistently defend the supreme position of *śuddhā-bhakti*, and its fruit non-different from itself, *bhagavat-prema*. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is an extremely devotional, outspoken text, and it would be difficult to interpret it in the light of the strict *Vedāntic* kind of *advaita*. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, then, when dealing with the devotional texts like the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, seems to be

submissive to their direct message more than Śaṅkara is known to have been at least in his philosophical writings, and the result is an outspoken glorification of *bhakti* with slight admixtures of the importance of the path of *jñāna*.

For example, in his *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā*, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī divides the eighteen chapters of the *Bhagavad-gītā* into three consecutive parts, first dealing with *karma*, the second with *bhakti*, and the third with *jñāna*²⁸³. While the Gauḍīya ācāryas here consider *bhakti* to be the secret highest topic of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, hidden between the two external and subordinate paths of *karma* and *jñāna*, Madhusūdana apparently has no difficulty with *jñāna* coming at the conclusion of the scripture. While Śaṅkara, in his introduction to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, only speaks of the *nivṛtti-mārga* (*jñāna*) and *pravṛtti-mārga* (which seems to include both *karma* and *bhakti*, mere preparatory stages for *jñāna*), Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in the introduction to his own commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* seems to be eager to give a greater space to *bhakti*.

karma-niṣṭhā-jñāna-niṣṭhe kathite prathamāntyayoḥ
yataḥ samuccayo nāsti tayor ativirodhataḥ
bhagavad-bhakti-niṣṭhā tu madhyame parikīrtitā
ubhayānugatā sā hi sarva-vighnāpanodinī
karma-miśrā ca śuddhā ca jñāna-miśrā ca sā tridhā

Commitment (*niṣṭhā*) to *karma* and *jñāna* are described in the first and last of the three sections since there is no direct correlation between the two, as they are completely opposed to one another. Therefore commitment to *bhagavad-bhakti* is glorified between them. *Bhakti* follows both and rids each of all obstacles. It is of three kinds: *karma-miśrā*, *śuddhā* and *jñāna-miśrā*. (Introduction, verses 5-7)²⁸⁴

His logic is that *karma* in itself cannot lift one directly to *jñāna*; one needs the help of *bhakti* in between to rise to the platform of *jñāna*. Here, obviously, *bhakti* is only a means, a purificatory preparation for *advaitic jñāna*, a proposition certainly annoying to the Gauḍīya ācāryas. But when one already despairs about Madhusūdana's stance on *bhakti*, he surprises one and all with *bhakti* being present at the stage of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, where he says that without *bhakti*, further stages are not possible at all. This is a strange sudden outburst of his own appreciation of *bhakti*, not warranted by the *advaita-vāda*. For example, a few verses later in his introduction to the *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā*, he describes a person who has attained *nirvikalpa-samādhi*:

evam-bhūta brāhmaṇaḥ syāt variṣṭho brahma-vādinām

²⁸³ It is possible that this is his own idea, since it is not present in the commentaries of either Śrīdhara Svāmī, Śaṅkara or Rāmānuja. The Gauḍīya ācāryas seem to have accepted it from him, for example Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, but he explains it differently than Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

²⁸⁴ Swami Gambhirananda (Tr.), *Bhagavad-gītā with the Annotation Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā* by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (Kolkata 2007), p. 21.

guṇātītaḥ sthita-prajño viṣṇu-bhaktaś ca kathyate

Such a person is the *brāhmaṇa* and the greatest of *brahma-vādīs*. He has overcome the influence of the three *guṇas*, his intelligence is fixed, and he is a devotee of Viṣṇu. (Introduction, verse 28)²⁸⁵

To support his statement with credible *Upaniṣadic* wisdom, Madhusūdana quotes the famous verse from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6. 23),

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanāḥ*

Unto those great souls who have implicit faith and devotion to both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.

He seems to treat *bhakti* initially as a purificatory practice, while the *parā-bhakti* at the higher stages of advancement is something perhaps more unique to him:

*pūrva-bhūmau kṛtā bhaktir uttarām bhūmim ānayet
anyathā vighna-bāhulyāt phala-siddhiḥ sudurlabhā*

The devotion that was performed in the previous stages must now be brought to this higher stage. Otherwise, because of the many obstacles, the attainment of the result of one's *sādhana* is difficult. (Introduction, verse 32)

Here, he still seems to be treating *bhakti* as a mere means to the *phala-siddhi*, attainment of the results of *sādhana*, whatever they are. But at the stage of *jīvan-mukti*, he asserts, *bhakti* should no more be imagined as a means to attain any result, and it finally shines in its own perfection.

*evam prāg-bhūmi-siddhāv apy uttarottara-bhūmaye
vidheyā bhagavad-bhaktis tām vinā sā na siddhaye
jīvan-mukti-daśāyām tu na bhakteḥ phala-kalpanā
adveṣṭṛtvādivat teṣāṃ svabhāvo bhajanam hareḥ*

After the attainment of a particular stage, *bhakti* is always prescribed as a means to attain the next stage. Without it, there can be no perfection. But at the stage of *jīvan-mukti*, there is no more imagination of the result of *bhakti* (ie. it becomes an end in

²⁸⁵ The verse perhaps mirrors the statements in the *Bhagavad-gītā* such as *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati / samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*, "One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains *parā-bhakti* to Me." (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 18. 54)

itself). Just like the qualities such as the absence of hostility are natural to the *jīvan-muktas*, so is worship of Hari. (Introduction, verses 36-7)

Madhusūdana then proceeds with a famous quote from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1. 7. 10),

*ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ*

All different varieties of self-satisfied sages who are already beyond following the scriptural rules and regulations are attracted to worshipping the Lord in pure devotion because of His overpowering virtuous nature.

He wraps up this discussion on *bhakti* with a telling verse from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which again shows his partiality for *jñāna*:

*teṣāṃ jñānī nitya-yuktā eka-bhaktir viśiṣyate
priyo hi jñānino 'tyartham ahaṃ sa ca mama priyaḥ*

Of these, the one who is in full knowledge and who is always engaged in pure devotional service is the best. For I am very dear to him, and he is dear to Me. (*Bhagavad-gītā*, 7. 17)

In general, his treatment of *bhakti* does it slightly more justice than Śaṅkarācārya's interpretations, but one is nevertheless always afraid of the final shock, of *bhakti* being a mere means to be discarded in the final stage. The *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* become suspicious whenever *jñāna* is equated or even made superior to *bhakti*, which immediately reveals a confusion of ultimate goals and perfections. Unlike Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's path of advancement which is taken from Śaṅkarācārya in its general outline and uses *bhakti* or glorifies it only here and there, the *Gauḍīya* understanding of *bhakti* is *bhakti* from beginning to end, it is a full, perfect path to perfection, complete in itself, and it matures by its own purifying influence into the *śuddhā-bhakti* glorified in the *śāstras*, without any need for extraneous endeavors and sidetracked interests.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's theory of *bhakti*, then, is a compromise between the *advaitic* and the *Vaiṣṇava* understanding of *bhakti*. In the *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*, Madhusūdana quotes extensively from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, especially from its Eleventh Canto, where Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs Uddhava in a very detailed manner. According to the *Gauḍīya ācāryas*, the summum bonum of the *Bhāgavata*, its ultimate topic, is the *āśraya*, the Supreme Lord whose divine *līlā* is described in the Tenth Canto. Much like the *bhakti* section of the *Bhagavad-gītā* which is hidden between the two less important sections of *karma* and *jñāna*, in the *Bhāgavata* we also find the highest *bhakti* described in the Tenth Canto, which then apparently becomes overshadowed with *jñāna* in the Eleventh Canto. Many are the hurdles and

ditches in understanding *sāstra* by one's own meagre intelligence, and this last-minute focus on *jñāna* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is perhaps one of the most formidable for a casual reader.²⁸⁶

Let us now turn to the verses of the *Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*. In it, *bhakti* as a theological principle is treated with a side-by-side acceptance of the speculations of aesthetic theorists. We have seen Rūpa Gosvāmī and Kavi Karṇapūra agreeing with the poetic and aesthetic theorists on the wonderful, otherworldly nature of *rasa*, which they justified with the ontologically blissful nature of *bhakti*. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, in a similar vein, is careful to maintain the supremacy of the experience of *bhakti*, and the supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa pitted against the *devādi-viṣayā-rati*, defined by him as love for the *devatās* other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*ratir devādi-viṣayā vyabhicārī tathorjitah
bhāvaḥ prokto raso neti yad uktam rasa-kovidaiḥ
devāntareṣu jīvatvād parānanda-prakāśanāt
tad-yojyaṁ paramānanda- rūpe na paramātmani
kāntādi-viṣayā vā ye rasādyās tatra nedṛśam
rasatvaṁ puṣyate pūrṇa- sukhāsparśitva-kāraṇāt
paripūrṇa-rasā kṣudra- rasebhyo bhagavad-ratiḥ
khadyotebhyo ivāditya- prabheva balavattarā*

The knowers of *rasa* have declared that *devādi-viṣayā-rati* and the *vyabhicārī* expressed through *vyañjanā* are merely *bhāvas* and cannot become *rasas*. That can only hold true for the lesser *devatās* other than the Supreme Soul, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because these lesser *devatās* are mere *jīvas* and there cannot be supreme bliss in love for them. All of the mundane *rasas* such as *śṛṅgāra* also cannot reach the highest joy due to their always being at least slightly touched by sorrow. *Bhagavad-rati* becomes *rasa* in its fullness, and shines with great strength like the sun, while these other trifling mundane *rasas* are like glowworms in its presence. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 2. 74-78)

Like Bopadeva, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī turns to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* for the variety of emotions expressed in relation to the Lord, and includes *kāma*, *krodha*, *bhaya* and *sneha* as possible emotions, later on specifying whether they qualify for *bhakti-rasas* or not. His general definition of *bhakti* is as follows:

*drutasya bhagavad-dharmād dhārā-vāhikatām gatā
sarveṣo manaso vṛttir bhaktir ity abhidhīyate
citta-dravyaṁ hi jatuvat svabhāvāt kaṭhinātmakam
tāpakair viṣayair yoge dravatvaṁ pratipadyate
kāma-krodha-bhaya-sneha- harṣa-śoka-dayādayaḥ
tāpakāś citta-jatunas tac-chāntau kaṭhinas tu tat*

²⁸⁶ Whole books have been written along these lines, for example, Daniel P. Sheridan, *The Advaitic Theism of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Delhi, 1986).

Bhakti is a function of the mind which has melted due to the practice of *bhagavad-dharma*, and has become like an unbroken stream of attention (to *Bhagavān*).

Consciousness is by nature hard like lac, and it can melt in the presence of melting agents (*tāpakas*), which are the objects of its attention.

The presence of melting agents such as *kāma*, *krodha*, *bhaya*, *sneha*, *harṣa*, *śoka*, *dayā* and so on, melts the consciousness, while their disappearance makes the consciousness hard again. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 3-5)

This melting nature of consciousness is the basis of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's theory, and we can recall the corresponding terms in other theories we have met so far, for example Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of *bhāva*: *prema-sūryāṁśu-sāmya-bhāk / rucibhiś citta-māsṛṇya-kṛd asau bhāva ucyate*, "Bhāva is like a ray of *prema*, melting the consciousness with its rays." (BRS, 1. 3. 1) Madhusūdana Sarasvatī supports his theory with the *sāṅkhya* doctrine, that the objects of sense perception leave an impression in the consciousness of the perceiver: *grhṇāti viṣayākāraṁ mano viṣaya-yogataḥ*, "In contact with the objects, the mind accepts their respective forms." (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 20) In accordance with this explanation, he proceeds with a definition of a *vāsanā* and a *vāsanābhāsa* (mere shadow of a *vāsanā*):

*drute citte vinikṣiptas vākāro yas tu vastunā
saṁskāra-vāsanā-bhāva- bhāvanā-śabda-bhāg asau
śītili-bhāva-mātram tu mano gacchaty atāpakaiḥ
na tatra vastu viśati vāsanātvena kiñcana
dravatāyām praviṣṭam sad yat kāṭhinya-daśām gatam
cetaḥ punar drutau satyām api tan naiva muñcati*

The objects impress their own form into the melted consciousness, and that impression is known by the names *saṁskāra*, *vāsanā*, *bhāva* and *bhāvanā*.

If the objects do not have the strength to melt the consciousness, they only succeed to make the consciousness slightly softer. But the impression does not remain. [That is called a *vāsanābhāsa*.]

But if the consciousness did melt, the impression will remain even if the mind then becomes hard again [like colors diluted in melted lac]. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 6-8)

When describing the mundane aesthetic experience, he calls the joy experienced in mundane *rasas* *parānanda*, 'higher bliss', and distinguishes it from *paramānanda*, 'highest bliss', which appears in the *bhakti-rasas*. His definition of the *sthāyi-bhāva* is as follows:

*sthāyi-bhāva-girā 'to 'sau vastv-ākāro 'bhidhīyate
vyaktaś ca rasatām eti parānandatayā punaḥ
bhagavān paramānanda- svarūpa svayam eva hi
mano-gatas tad ākāro rasatām eti puṣkalam*

With the notion *sthāyi-bhāva* we designate that form of the object which, upon becoming manifest, with the help of higher bliss, transforms into a *rasa*.

The Lord, however, is the very form of supreme bliss, and when His form is imprinted in the mind, it attains the condition of a superexcellent *rasa*. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 9-10)

His explanation of the aesthetic experience is based on *advaitic* concepts. Everything is ultimately Brahman, and so even mundane objects are ultimately part of Brahman and thus full of joy and knowledge. But since they are most of the time covered with the function of *māyā*, their spiritual nature remains hidden. When, however, for a moment the covering of *māyā* is removed in the aesthetic experience, the light of Brahman shines through for a second in the consciousness filled with *sattva*, and that is the momentary blissful experience of mundane *rasa*. Since there is a relation to mundane objects, however, this mundane *rasa* is always slightly less perfect than the manifestation of *bhakti-rasas*.

kāntādi-viśaye 'py asti kāraṇam sukha-cid-ghanam
kāryākāratayā 'bhāne 'py āvṛtam māyayā svataḥ
sad-ajñātam ca tad brahma meyam kāntādi-mānataḥ
māyā-vṛtti-tirobhāve vṛttyā sattva-sthayā kṣaṇam
atas tad eva bhāvatvaṁ manasi pratipadyate
kiñca nyūnāṁ ca rasatām yāti jāḍya-vimiśraṇāt

Even in the case of mundane objects, the reason for their appearance is Brahman, the source of everything, full of *cit* and *sukha*, but they appear to be covered by *māyā*.

Brahman, which is *sat*, eternally existing truth, and unknowable (*ajñāta*), appears measurable and attainable (*meyam*) when it is covered with the idea of mundane objects. For a moment, the function of *māyā* may become suspended in the minds of those filled with *sattva*.

At that time they are able to experience the appearance of mundane *rasa* in their minds. But its quality is slightly less [than the *bhakti-rasa* in relation to the uncovered Brahman in the form of the *sac-cid-ānanda-bhagavān*], because of the admixture of dull matter. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 11-13)

Surely, the impression of the Lord in the consciousness melted by *bhakti* is the supreme goal:

bhagavantam vibhum nityam pūrṇam bodha-sukhātmakam
yad grhṇāti drutam cittam kim anyad avaśiṣyate

When the melted consciousness accepts into itself the all-pervading, eternal and perfect Supreme Lord, who is the abode of happiness and spiritual awakening, what else remains to be done? (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 30)

Naturally, many of the analogies in the *Bhakti-rasāyana* are related to melting. In some characters, the consciousness is either so hard that no object can melt it and

imprint itself into it, or it is easily melted but unable to keep the impressions in itself. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī adds a simple word of wisdom:

*kāṭhinyam viṣaye kuryād dravatvam bhagavat-pade
upāyair āśāstra-nirdiṣṭair anukṣaṇam ato budhaiḥ*

With the help of processes described in the *śāstra*, one should continually strive for hardness in relation to worldly objects, and to meltedness in relation with the Lord. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 32)

He quotes wonderful verses that praise the ability of the consciousness to melt in relation with the Lord, for example,

*tad āśma-sāram hṛdayam batedam yad grhyamāṇair hari-nāma-dhyeyair
na vikriyetaṭha yadā vikāro netre jalam gātra-ruheṣu harṣaḥ*

Certainly that heart is made of stone which, in spite of one's chanting the holy name of the Lord with concentration, does not change when ecstasy takes place, tears fill the eyes and the hairs stand on end. (*Bhāg.* 2. 3. 2)

He proceeds with a description of the stages, *bhūmikās* of *bhakti*, eleven in number, and supports the enumeration with plenty examples from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

*upāyāḥ prathama-skandhe nārādenopavarṇitāḥ
saṁkṣepāt tān ahaṁ vakṣye bhūmi-bheda-vibhāgataḥ
prathamam mahatām sevā tad-dayā-pātratā tataḥ
śraddhāta teṣāṁ dharmeṣu tato hari-guṇa-śrutiḥ
tato raty-aṅkurotpattiḥ svarūpādhigatas tataḥ
prema-vṛddhiḥ parānande tasyātha sphuraṇam tataḥ
bhagavad-dharma-niṣṭhā 'tas svasmiṁs tad-guṇa-śālitaḥ
premṇo 'tha paramākāṣṭhety uditā bhakti-bhūmikā*

The *upāyas* in *bhakti* have been enumerated by Nārada Muni in the First Canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. I here describe them only briefly, according to different phases. The first stage is *mahatām sevā* (serving the devotees), then comes *tad-dayā-pātratā* (becoming the recipient of their mercy), next is *śraddhā* (faith) in the *dharmas* they are committed to, and then *hari-guṇa-śruti* (hearing about the virtues of Hari). Then comes *raty-aṅkurotpatti* (the sprouting of love) and then the attainment of one's constitutional spiritual position (*svarūpādhigata*). Then in great bliss, the divine love (*prema*) increases, and becomes increasingly manifest. Then one becomes fixed in *bhagavad-dharma*, and notices the qualities of the Lord appearing in his own person. These are the stages of *bhakti*, of which *prema* is the supreme final stage. (*Bhakti-rasāyana*, 1. 33-36)

The correlation with other theories of advancement in *bhakti* is immediately apparent, for example with Rūpa Gosvāmī's stages of progress, beginning with *ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgaḥ* (BRS, 1. 4. 15-16). Between the two, minimal differences exist, mostly limited to terminology. Madhusūdana also calls the appearance of *rati* 'the sprouting of *rati*', a phrase also used by Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Kavi Karṇapūra.

In the second *ullāsa*, Madhusūdana turns to the specific *bhakti-rasas*, determined by their various causes.

drute citte praviṣṭā yā govindākāratā sthirā
sā bhaktir ity abhihitā viśeṣas tv adhunocyate
citta-druteḥ kāraṇānām bhedaḥ bhaktis tu bhidyate
tāny uktāni saṁkṣepād vyākhyāyante 'dhunā sphuṭam

When the form of Govinda becomes steadily imprinted into the melted consciousness, that is called *bhakti*, and it will now be explained in detail. Due to the different causes of melting, it is divided into separate *rasas*, which will now be clearly described.

His system of *bhakti-rasas* is as follows:

1. *kāma*, divided into *saṁbhoga* and *vipralambha*
2. *dveṣa* born of *īrṣyā*, of two kinds: a desire for the destruction of the object of *dveṣa* (as in Śiśupāla) or love for the object of *dveṣa* (as in the *gopīs* angry with Kṛṣṇa' pastimes with other *gopīs*), which is actually *rati*
3. *bhayam*, which is the cause for *dveṣa*, as in Kāṁsa
4. *sneha*, divided into *vātsalya* and *preyān* (*dāsya*, *sakhya* and a mixture of both),
5. *harṣa*, divided into pure *harṣa* in realization of the Lord, and *hāsa*, *vismaya* and *utsāha* (divided into *dayotsāha*, *dānotsāha*, and *dharmotsāha*)
6. *śoka*, born of separation from the beloved person
7. *jugupsā*, of three kinds: *udveginī* (of blood etc.), *kṣobhinī* (of ghosts etc.), and *śuddhā* (*dehendriyādi-duḥkhatva-vicaraṇa-puraḥsarā*)
8. *śama* born of *vairāgya*.

Of those, *dharmotsāha*, *dayotsāha*, all three forms of *jugupsā* as well as *śama* cannot become *rasas* (*dharma-vīra*, *dayā-vīra*, *bībhatsa* and *śānta*), because they are not directed to any object. *Dveṣa* born of *īrṣyā* or *bhaya* cannot become a *rasa* even if it has Śrī Kṛṣṇa as its object (as in Kāṁsa and Śiśupāla)²⁸⁷.

²⁸⁷ Madhusūdana writes that it can only become *bhakti* in their next life, when the obstacles to positive love are removed (BR, 2. 55), and adds that those who presently worship the Lord with such *dveṣa* may hope for the same result, or, if their minds are not melting, then their result is similar to King Vena's, who is an example of one who was not able to focus one's mind on the Lord neither positively nor negatively, and attained a destination not very desirable.

It is interesting to see *harṣa* among the *sthāyīs*, especially since it seems to include varieties which are elsewhere counted as separate *sthāyīs* (*hāsa*, *vismaya* and *utsāha*). As in Bopadeva, we see an inclination to follow the verses in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (7. 1. 29-30), which has proven to be a difficult task for anyone who tried. *Śama* is kept separately in its own sphere of *vairāgya*, and we are happy to notice that it is not treated as the final end of all variegated *rasas*, as was the case in the *Parā-bhakti-sūtras* quoted in Chapter 1. This means that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī values *bhakti-rasas* not only in an ephemeral way, but allows them to be forms of ultimate perfection.

The last, third *ullāsa* of the *Bhakti-rasāyana*, studies the elements of the experience of *rasa* in more detail, and contrasts the mundane *rasa* experience with the otherworldliness of the *bhakti-rasas*. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has probably made *bhakti-rasa* acceptable to many who are outside the sphere of influence of the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas*, and he frequently takes care to position himself within the realm of *mīmāṃsīc*, *naiyāyic* and *vedāntic* rules of argument.



*ṣyāmaà sundara-vigrahaà tribhuvanādhéçaà mudā nartaya
lālayā lalitālayaà tata-layaà tāruēya-helā-yutam
mat-svānte rasa-bhāvuke nava-rasaà sāraà girāà saḡgirad
rādhāyāu praēayollasad-vilasitaà lāsyaà vidadhyāt sadā*

The pastime of Śrī Rādhā's dancing playfully makes the beautiful Śyāma, the Lord of the three worlds, dance along with joy. It is the abode of graceful gestures in slow rhythm and shines with supreme affection, brimming with youthfulness and loving feelings. Let the *lāsya* dance of Rādhā, a glimpse of which devours the essence of speech, always create a new *rasa* in my heart, which is so eager to taste it.

❧ *Part Two* ❧

Dramaturgy

in Service to Bhakti-rasa

❧ *Chapter Seven* ❧

Drama or Līlā or Both?

7. 1. Devotional Drama

This chapter is devoted to the discussion about the relation between devotional drama and the arousal of *bhakti-rasa* caused by it. Let us try to articulate the purpose of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *bhakti-rasa* theory and the help of drama in it, as he conceives it. In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, we find a famous series of verses, beginning with 'nave raty-aṅkure jāte' ("When the sprout of *bhagavad-rati* is still young, devotional drama is helpful in its growth"). It will form a basis for a discussion about the assistance of drama in enhancing one's emotion towards the Lord. In that sense, the potential of an individual devotee for a specific *bhakti-rasa*, although the *rasa* is in a sense eternally predestined and unchangeable, may nevertheless pass through stages of qualitative and quantitative improvement. There is the possibility of 'upward mobility' within the system – attributed to the highly attractive nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the more intimate *rasas* in relation to Him. A few traditional historical examples testify to that fact.

It is of course necessary to discuss the difference in the way drama is apprehended by the general audience, and devotional drama as seen by devotional eyes. Rūpa Gosvāmī does acknowledge the help of the concept of generalization even in devotional drama, but for him it is only a means to the end, the end being very much defined in terms of *bhagavad-bhakti*, and not mere enjoyment of poetry.

The most interesting part of the comparison between devotional drama and direct *prakaṣa-līlā* of *Bhagavān*, seen or heard about, is the fact that both use their attractive nature to drag an observer right into their time and place. It is interesting to see the parallels between both. The idea of deep emotional empathy is greatly valued by Rūpa Gosvāmī, and other commentators agree, citing examples of impressing degrees. Viśvanātha Cakravartī, for example, remarks that a certain actor, playing the role of King Daśaratha in a drama about Śrī Rāma, actually died on stage while experiencing the pain of separation from his exiled son.

Of course, aspiring to such an extreme level of intensity may perhaps not appeal to everyone, but nevertheless, efforts to attain emotional softness and absorption are closely related to the ideal of perfection within the Caitanya *sampradāya*. The *rāgānugā-bhakti*, as it is called, consists of mentally approximating the feelings of a particular associate of the Lord, and ends in attaining the same status of an emotionally rich associate of the Lord. Such a practice has striking similarities with the idea of the audience in the theatre coming under the influence of *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa*, as Abhinavagupta would say. Here, drama in a classical sense merges with the concept of the *nitya-līlā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and it is interesting to see the related points.

7. 1. 1. *Nave raty-aṅkure jāte ... kiñcit tat-kāvya-nāṭyayoḥ*

Towards the end of the *sthāyi-bhāva-laharī* in the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī addresses the difference between his own aesthetic theory and the classical one: is the experience of *bhakti-rasa* a matter of poetry and drama only?

<i>eteṣān tu tathābhāve</i>	<i>bhagavat-kāvya-nāṭyayoḥ</i>
<i>sevām āhuḥ param̐ hetum̐</i>	<i>kecit tat-pakṣa-rāgiṇaḥ</i>
<i>kintu tatra sudustarka-</i>	<i>mādhuryādbhuta-sampadaḥ</i>
<i>rater asyāḥ prabhāvo 'yaṁ</i>	<i>bhavet kāraṇam uttamam</i>
<i>mahā-śakti-vilāsātmā</i>	<i>bhāvo 'cintya-svarūpa-bhāk</i>
<i>raty-ākhyā ity ayaṁ yukto</i>	<i>na hi tarkeṇa bādhitum</i>
<i>bhāratād yuktir eṣā hi</i>	<i>prāktanair apy udāhṛtā</i>
<i>acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvāḥ</i>	<i>na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet</i>
<i>prakṛtibhyaḥ param̐ yac ca</i>	<i>tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam</i>

Some scholars partial to poetry and drama are of the opinion that the involvement in poetry and drama about the Lord is the primary cause of the aforementioned aesthetic components. However, the ultimate cause of the aesthetic components is the power of love itself, which is the wonderful perfection of a sweetness (*mādhurya*) that is beyond reason. That emotion called love (*rati*) is part of the inconceivable divine nature (*acintya-svarūpa*) and its essence is the playful emanation of the great power (*mahā-śakti-vilāsātmā*). As such, it cannot be invalidated by reason. Indeed, the ancients have illustrated this with a passage from the *Mahābhārata* (*Udyoga-parva*): Those emotions are indeed inconceivable, and one should not try to comprehend them with mere logic. Inconceivable is defined as something that is beyond all ordinary nature. (BRS, 2. 5. 90-93)

In the devotional aesthetic experience, the aesthetic components are aroused by the inconceivable love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is the *sthāyi-bhāva*, and in turn they augment the *sthāyī* to the point of the experience of *bhakti-rasa* in the heart of a devotee:

<i>vibhāvatādīn ānīya</i>	<i>kṛṣṇādīn mañjulā ratih</i>
<i>etair eva tathābhūtaiḥ</i>	<i>svar̐ sam̐vardhayaty asau</i>
<i>yathā svair eva salilaiḥ</i>	<i>paripūrya balāhakān</i>
<i>ratnālayo bhavaty ebhir</i>	<i>vṛṣṭais tair eva vāridhiḥ</i>

This charming love makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa and related factors into an excitant and other related aesthetic components, and then expands itself by means of these very components. This process is just like the ocean which, having filled clouds with its own water, increases itself by means of this very rain water. (BRS, 2. 5. 94-95)

Much of the devotional literature of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* can be defined as descriptions of the arousal of the *sthāyī* in a devotee's heart, with the help of the accompanying ingredients of the devotionally inspired aesthetic experience, to the point of intense *bhakti-rasāsvāda*²⁸⁸. These experiences are most often described in relation to the *nitya-parikaras* of the Lord, and obviously it would be foolish to deny the experience of *bhakti-rasa* to them, when they are the strongest and most ideal examples of its appearance.

Their exemplary response to the excitants, corresponding quantitatively to the amount of *Kṛṣṇa-rati* in their hearts, in turn acts as an ideal mould, an exemplary model, for devotees reading or hearing these descriptions. Just as the aesthetic experience can be broadened from the controlled environment of the theatre to all kinds of circumstances of reading, hearing or watching the poetry being played out, recited, or simply read on one's own, so the devotional aesthetic experience is broadened to include recitations of scripture, solitary reading about the Lord's *nāma-rūpa-guṇa-līlā*, watching religious dramas of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, the *kīrtana-yātrās* and so on.

The controlled environment such as the one in the theatre is helpful to the degree that it assists the audience in focusing exclusively on the Lord, which is perhaps slightly more difficult to attain on one's own²⁸⁹. However, one's budding relationship with the Lord should remain a matter very much individual and unpretentious, and external displays of emotion are, unless fully natural and pure, highly discouraged in traditional *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* culture. The *ācāryas* of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* have occasionally been mocking the professional devotional performers, who may play expertly the many devotional roles like Nārada Muni or Viṣṇupriyā, the chaste wife of Mahāprabhu²⁹⁰, but they are in their everyday life far away from the ideal integrity of the emotional perfections of these devotees²⁹¹. Certainly, devotional drama is meant to arouse the devotional sentiments in the public, and ideally it should deeply inspire the actors as well – who should themselves be devotees and not mere professionals. But the sign of a devotee whose love of God has attained the

²⁸⁸ The major part of scriptures such as the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, or the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, is just that – poetic descriptions of the devotional aesthetic experiences by various devotees in direct or indirect contact with the Supreme Lord.

²⁸⁹ In drama, the *vibhāvas* and so on can be potently presented in forms perceivable with all the senses, and thus the experience tends to be more intense than, for example, reading drama on one's own. But if there are too many discrepancies in the drama which hinder the development of the appropriate *rasas* in the spectators, then it may well be true that one is better off on one's own, reading and visualizing the pastimes of the Lord as described in the *śāstras*.

²⁹⁰ Her devastation at the time of the Lord's *sannyāsa* is frequently the theme of theatrical performances, as well as her exemplary widowed life afterwards, spent in highly renounced devotional practices.

²⁹¹ Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would jokingly call such actors '*yātrā-dale nārada*', the Nārada Muni in the group of actors, which implied mere expertise in all kinds of devotional *anubhāvas* and *sāttvikas*, but no corresponding emotion in the heart which would change his life for the better.

dawn of maturity would be that even outside such dramatical circumstances his *bhakti-rasa* is potently aroused by the mere appearance of the appropriate excitants. Rūpa Gosvāmī puts it this way:

nave raty-aṅkure jāte hari-bhaktasya kasyacit
vibhāvatvādi-hetutvaṁ kiñcit tat-kāvya-nāṭyayoḥ
harer īṣac-chruti-vidhau rasāsvādaḥ satām bhavet
rater eva prabhāvo 'yaṁ hetus teṣām tathākṛtau
mādhuryādyāśrayatvena kṛṣṇādīṁs tanute ratiḥ
tathānubhūyamānās te vistīrṇām kurvate ratim
atas tasya vibhāvādi- catuṣkasya rater api
atra sāhāyakaṁ vyaktaṁ mitho 'jasram avekṣyate

In the case of the inexperienced devotee in whom love has only sprouted, a poem or drama about Hari may be somewhat effective in providing the excitants and other aesthetic components. But saints with mature love can experience *rasa* upon hearing about Hari in the slightest degree; and in this case, the cause of the aesthetic components is clearly the powerful influence of their love. Love makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa and related factors into vessels of sweetness, and then when Kṛṣṇa and the related factors are experienced as such, they expand the love. Therefore, here a perpetual and mutual support can clearly be seen between this love (the foundational emotion) and the four remaining aesthetic components (the excitants, indications, responses and the transitory emotions). (BRS, 2. 5. 96-99)

Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī in their commentaries to these verses seem prone to the conclusion that theatre in itself is not even highly indispensable in the lives of the devotees. Since the mainstay of the experience of *bhakti-rasa* is the Kṛṣṇa-rati in the hearts of the devotees, theatrical performances act only as external catalysts for its arousal. Nevertheless, poetic expression remains a valuable tool for the proper presentation of devotional sentiments, as is amply evidenced in the many aesthetic-cum-religious works and extensive poetry of the many *bhakti-sampradāyas*. Even without dramaturgical arrangements, hearing about the pastimes of the Lord has been the obsession of the devotees for ages. Jīva Gosvāmī cites the examples of Hanumān who keeps hearing the *Rāmāyaṇa* again and again, or Parīkṣit Mahārāja who sat spellbound for seven days without food and drink, simply feasting on the Lord's *līlā*. The Vraja-gopīs themselves glorify the amazing effects of hearing about the Lord, in their famous *Gopī-gītā* (Bhāg. 10. 31. 9)²⁹²:

²⁹² The verses of the *Gopī-gītā* are wonderfully poetic, all composed in the melodic metre *Rājamaṁsī* (named after a female royal swan, due to their comparable gracefulness). The caesura (regular break in recitation of every line) is after the sixth syllable. An amazing poetic embellishment of these verses is that in every line, the first and seventh consonant are always the same, as well as all first and seventh vowels in all the four lines of every verse.

*tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam kavibhir īditam kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalam śrīmad-ātataṁ bhuvi gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ*

The nectar of Your words and the descriptions of Your activities are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, eradicate one's sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are broadcast all over the world and are filled with spiritual power. Certainly those who spread the message of Godhead are most munificent.

If the performers of devotional dramas are not devotees, they do not possess real, extraordinary *Kṛṣṇa-rati*, and therefore cannot bestow it upon the public. If the public are not devotees, they also do not possess *Kṛṣṇa-rati*, and can only experience ordinary mundane *rasāsvāda*, or are affected momentarily with *raty-ābhāsa*, which sinks into oblivion as soon as they return home. Ideally, real *Kṛṣṇa-rati* is a contagious permanent attachment to the service of the Lord and a concomitant detachment from objects or activities unfavorable for that engagement. Potent *bhakti-rasāsvāda*, manifesting from such *Kṛṣṇa-rati* with the help of the excipients and so on, should be the result of a successfully performed devotional drama.

Sometimes, the devotees may see dramas performed by actors whose qualifications are more professional than devotional, and by the influence of their own *Kṛṣṇa-rati*, the *bhakti-rasāsvāda* is nevertheless manifest in the hearts of the devoted audience. This obviously means that the performers were only external causes of its appearance, and could not have brought the *Kṛṣṇa-rati* into the hearts of the audience if it was not there to start with. The more impeccable the character of the performers – and closer to the actual qualities of the roles they are representing – the deeper will be the appreciation of the public and their subsequent experience of *bhakti-rasa*.

In India, many semi-devotional troupes are active, consisting of members who, although professionals in a sense, are nevertheless somewhat affected with devotional ideals²⁹³. It is seen that upon their arrival into a certain Indian city where they present their row of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, *Rāma-līlā* or *Gaura-līlā* performances, the public responds most emotionally in the first few days, when their appreciation of the actors is highest. Through the days, however, the public becomes familiar with the actors and it becomes more and more difficult to see divine beings behind the actors with their semi-divine qualities.

Rūpa Gosvāmī is concerned that all the elements of devotional aesthetic experience are present in a pure form, not deformed by any impropriety or

²⁹³ An adequate presentation of such religious dramas can be found in: John Stratton Hawley, *At Play with Krishna – Pilgrimage Dramas from Brindavan* (Delhi, 1992). Norvin Hein likens them to their medieval Christian counterpart and chooses to call them 'miracle plays' in his work, *The Miracle Plays of Mathurā* (New Haven, 1972).

contamination. Kṛṣṇa-rati is very potent in itself, but when there is impropriety in the presentation, it contracts itself, and *bhakti-rasāsvāda* becomes impossible:

*kintv etasyāḥ prabhāvo 'pi vairūpye sati kuñcati
vairūpyan tu vibhāvāder anaucityam udīryate*

When there is a deformity in the excitant or any other aesthetic component, then even the power of love contracts itself. A deformity is defined as an impropriety (*anaucityam*) in the aesthetic components. (BRS, 2. 5. 100)

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī lists examples of such *anaucitya* in his commentary to this verse. In the case of devotional dramas, the *anaucitya* may be in the audience, in the actors, or in the presentation itself – for example, the irregularities in the depicted characters incompatible with their actual behavior or age, and so on. If Rādhā is depicted as older than Kṛṣṇa, then the appreciation for Their relationship shrinks. The same sort of improprieties may also be present in poetic works, and there also, the *rati* becomes restricted.

As we have already discussed in Chapter 5, Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmī accept the notion of *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa*, generalization, in the experience of *bhakti-rasa*. Rūpa Gosvāmī explains it in the following three verses:

*alaukikyā prakṛtye yaṁ sudurūhā rasa-sthitiḥ
yatra sādharmaṇatayā bhāvāḥ sādhu sphuranty amī
eṣāṁ sva-para-sambandha- niyamānirṇayo hi yaḥ
sādhāraṇyaṁ tad evoktam bhāvānāṁ pūrva-sūribhiḥ
tad uktam śrī bharatena –
śaktir asti vibhāvādeḥ kāpi sādharmaṇīkṛtau
pramātā tad-abhedena svayaṁ yayā pratipadyate iti*

Because of its extraordinary nature, the state of *rasa*, wherein all the aesthetic components clearly appear as generalized, is extremely difficult to understand. Ancient sages have defined the generalization of the aesthetic components as the disregard of the sense of 'my' and 'another'. Śrī Bharata has said: In generalized actions there is a special power of the excitants and other aesthetic components by which the experiencer comprehends them as his own. (BRS, 2. 5. 101-103)

Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the extraordinary Kṛṣṇa-rati in the hearts of the devotees facilitates an identification in their mind, with the devotees of the past who possess the same kind of extraordinary *rati*. According to the sameness of the *rati* (the *sthāyi-bhāva*), the *bhakti-rasa* that manifests from it is also of the same type as in the characters of the past. He adds that the generalization is effective in the case of the *sthāyi-bhāva* as well as in all other aesthetic components, beginning with *vibhāvas*. He quotes a line of verses from the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* on the same subject:

vyāpāro 'sti vibhāvāder nāmnā sādharmaṇī-kṛtiḥ
 tat-prabhāvāt parasyāsan pāthodhi-plavanādayaḥ²⁹⁴
 utsāhādi-samudbodhaḥ sādharmaṇyābhimānataḥ
 nṛṇām api samudrādi- laṅghanādaḥ na duṣyati
 sādharmaṇyena ratyādir api tadvat pratīyate
 parasya na parasyeti mameti na mameti ca
 tad-āsvāde vibhāvādeḥ paricchedo na vidyate

A special function exists in the excitants and other aesthetic elements, known as *sādharmaṇī-karaṇa* or *sādharmaṇī-kṛti* (generalization, or universalization). By its influence, the acts of the hero are perceived by the spectators as if they would be their own. Although the acts of the heroes may be extraordinary and beyond the power of men, it is not a fault on the part of spectators to identify with the characters and awaken their particular *bhāvas* in their own consciousness (like *utsāha* in the case of Hanumān who jumped over the sea). By the process of generalization, the *bhāvas* like *rati* observed in the characters of the play are apprehended by the spectators as if their own. In the tasting of *rasa*, the relisher makes no distinction about the aesthetic components, such as whether the sentiments are of the hero or one's own, or not of the hero and not one's own. (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 9-12)

Jīva Gosvāmī comments that there should be no fear or shame in identifying with the *bhāvas* of the associates of the Lord through the process of generalization. Viśvanātha Cakravartī presents concrete examples: a devotee hearing the recitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* may become enthused with the mood of Hanumān when he jumped over the ocean, and in the joy of the vicarious experience of that *bhāva* the devotee may jump up the audience, giving up all shyness, and imitate Hanumān's prowess. Viśvanātha Cakravartī adds an extraordinary example of the depth of sentiment achieved through generalization: an actor taking the role of Daśaratha in a drama about Lord Rāmacandra, upon hearing that the Lord left for the forest, became so absorbed in the feelings of separation that, like Mahārāja Daśaratha, he gave up his life right on the stage.

The next two verses in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* explain the generalization for the devotees in more detail:

duḥkṣhādayaḥ sphuranto 'pi jātu svīyatayā hṛdi
 prauḍhānanda-camatkāra- carvaṇām eva tanvate
 parāśrayatayāpy ete jātu bhāntaḥ sukhādayaḥ
 hṛdaye paramānanda- sandoham upacinvate

²⁹⁴ All the versions of the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* I was able to consult have an additional line here: *pramātā yad abhedena svātmānam pratipadyate*. This line seems to correspond in meaning to the line *sādharmaṇyena ratyādir api tadvat pratīyate*. Shaligram Shukla Shastri, *Sāhitya-darpaṇaḥ* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 54-55.

The sufferings of the previous devotees appear in the hearts of the present devotees as if they were their own, but along with it, an astonishing taste of intense bliss is also experienced.

On the other hand, when the present devotee perceives the happiness of the previous devotees, he is happy to see them happy and so experiences the highest joy in his heart. (BRS, 2. 5. 104-5)

We now turn from the field of drama to the higher implications of generalization. In *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* culture, the act of approximating and embodying the sentiments of the eternal associates of the Lord is not attempted as mere aesthetic enjoyment. It is purposely practiced with concentrated attention and seriousness, for its goal could not be more serious than it is – reentering the eternal pastimes of the Lord in the humble role of an emotionally susceptible assistant.

7. 2. *The Eternal Drama of Kṛṣṇa-līlā*

In the situation of the present-time devotees who turn for inspiration to the scriptures which depict the devotional experiences of the eternal associates of the Lord, we encounter a special variety of *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa* or generalization. The feelings of ideal devotees with whom one shares the same *sthāyi-bhāva* are not only ‘enjoyed’ in a depersonalized way, but are more and more deeply ‘imagined’ and accepted as one’s own²⁹⁵. ‘Imagined’ seems like a bad word, but advancement on the path of *bhakti* is often a combination of one’s intuition about the direction in which one desires to move, blessed by the words of the *śāstra*, *guru* and likeminded *sādhus*, and divine as-if-accidental revelations, amplified and pursued with carefully chosen pieces of inspiration. Rūpa Gosvāmī touches this topic in his *Upadeśāmṛta*:

*tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi janānugāmī
kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram*

The essence of all advice is that one should utilize one’s full time – twenty-four hours a day – in nicely chanting and remembering the Lord’s divine name (*nāma*), transcendental form (*rūpa*), qualities (*guṇa*) and eternal pastimes (*līlā*), thereby gradually engaging one’s tongue and mind. In this way one should reside in Vraja [Goloka Vṛndāvana *dhāma*] and serve Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of devotees. One

²⁹⁵ Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmīs both use the word *abhimāna* here, ‘conceit’ or ‘self-conception’, used in a positive sense of one’s spiritual identification.



should follow in the footsteps of the Lord's beloved devotees (*tad-anurāgi-janānugāmī*), who are deeply attached to His devotional service. (*Upadeśāmṛta*, verse 8)

This instruction of the *Upadeśāmṛta* is closely related to a pair of verses in the *sādhana-bhakti-laharī* of the *pūrva-vibhāga* of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janam cāsyā preṣṭhaṁ nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā
sevā sādha-ka-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ*

Remembering the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His dear associates who have inclinations for service similar to one's own, one should always live in Vraja and absorb oneself in topics related to them.

Following the inhabitants of Vraja, one should perform external devotional acts in one's physical body, and internal devotional acts in one's *siddha-deha* (perfected form), with a desire to emulate the *bhāvas* of the eternal associates of the Lord. (BRS, 1. 2. 294-5)

Since these two verses are probably among the most exalted and esoteric in all of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* literature, we should honor them by first studying the preparatory stages, the qualifications of the practitioners, and the overall implications of such practices very minutely.

7. 2. 1. *Vaidhī and Rāgānugā Kinds of Sādhana-bhakti*

The *sādhana-bhakti-laharī* in the *pūrva-vibhāga* of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is one of the most extensive *laharīs*. In it, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī defines *sādhana-bhakti* as a regulated practice that leads to the awakening of *bhāva*. In its practicing stage, *bhakti* may appear to be a more or less impressive mechanical going-through-the-motions of religious acts characteristic of a devoted heart. Eventually, through Divine Grace and persistent practice, the soul awakens in devotion and continues to perform the same devotional acts, now prompted by its own reawakened *bhāva*.

*kṛti-sādhya bhavet sādhyā- bhāva sā sādhanābhidhā
nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya prākāṣyam hṛdi sādhyatā*

Action of the senses, which produces the stage of *bhāva*, is called *sādhana-bhakti*. This attained state of *bhāva-bhakti* (*sādhyatā*) is an eternal *sthāyi-bhāva* which is not created, but simply manifests within the soul by the spiritual energy of the Lord. (BRS, 1. 2. 2)

Sādhana-bhakti is divided into two subvarieties or rather stages: *vaidhī* and *rāgānugā*. When it is prompted by the rules and orders of the scriptures, *bhakti* is called *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti*, and when it matures to the point that the inducement for devotional activity is not scriptural injunctions but spontaneous attraction to serving the Lord, it is called *rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti*²⁹⁶. It is still a variety of *sādhana-bhakti* and the practice does not cease, rather, quite naturally, it increases and intensifies. It is not a slackening of ascetic rigidity by those who imagine they have suddenly become very advanced, it is a silently personal, sometimes not so easily discernible change in the quality of impetus for *bhakti*, in the consciousness of a particular devotee. Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes from the *Pañcarātra*:

*surarṣe vihita-śāstre harim uddiśya yā kriyā
saiva bhaktir iti proktā tayā bhaktiḥ parā bhavet*

O Surarṣi, all activities prescribed in the scriptures with the Lord as the object are called *vaidhī-bhakti*. By the performance of *vaidhī-bhakti*, one attains *parā-bhakti* (*prema*, *rāga*). (Quoted in BRS, 1. 2. 13)

7. 2. 2. *Vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti*

The *adhikārī* for such *vaidhī-bhakti* is described as someone who, by the mercy of the devotees, has attained the rare fortune of faith in *bhakti*, and who is neither too renounced nor too materially attached.²⁹⁷ All human beings have a right to perform *bhakti*, just as bathing in the sacred rivers is anyone's right. Rūpa Gosvāmī divides the *adhikārīs* into three levels, *uttama*, *madhyama* and *kaniṣṭha*, according to their degree of faith, realization and consequent maturity of practice. When the four kinds of candidates for *bhakti* enumerated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7. 16) get rid of the grip of their initial concerns by the grace of the Lord and His devotees, they become qualified for pure *bhakti*. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives examples of all four varieties (*ārta*, *jijñāsu*, *arthārthī*, *jñānī*): Gajendra, being greedy to attain the sweetness of the Lord, gave up his desire to get relief from suffering and thus became a pure devotee. The sages headed by Śaunaka gave up the desire to hear about Svargaloka and other topics through the association of Sūta, and became pure devotees. Dhruva by the mercy of the Lord gave up the desire for a kingdom and

²⁹⁶ Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions that in other *Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas* (specifically in the Vallabha-sampradāya), these two varieties are sometimes known as *maryādā-mārga* (the path of propriety, rules) and *puṣṭi-mārga* (the path of grace) respectively.

²⁹⁷ The verse by Rūpa Gosvāmī seems to follow a similar statement in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *yadyṅcchayā mat-kathādaḥ jāta-śraddho 'stu yaḥ pumān / na nirviṇṇo nātisakto bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-daḥ* (Bhāg. 11. 20. 8)

became a pure devotee. The Kumāras by the mercy of the Lord gave up the desire for liberation and became pure, personalist devotees.

Rūpa Gosvāmī convincingly argues about the supremacy of *bhakti* over the ordinary social and mundane religious duties, quoting *sarva-dharmān parityajya* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18. 66) and a famous verse from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (11. 5. 41) stating that one who has surrendered to the lotus feet of Mukunda has no more debts to the demigods, sages, other living entities, family members, humankind or forefathers.

The bulk of the *sādhana-bhakti-laharī* is an enumeration of the various possible practices within *bhakti*, called *aṅgas*, which are classified as either single actions (like *praṇāma*) or complex practices consisting of different parts of engagement (like *arcana*, the worship of the Deity).

atha aṅgāni –

*guru-padāśrayas tasmāt kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam
viśrambhena guroḥ sevā sādhu-varmānuvartanam
sad-dharma-prcchā bhogādi- tyāgaḥ kṛṣṇasya hetave
nivāso dvārakādau ca gaṅgāder api sannidhau
vyāvahāreṣu sarveṣu yāvad-arthānuvartitā
hari-vāsara-sammāno dhātry-aśvatthādi-gauravam
eṣāṁ atra daśāṅgānāṁ bhavet prārambha-rūpatā*

The preliminary ten *aṅgas* of *bhakti* are as follows: 1) taking shelter of the *guru*, 2) taking initiation and receiving knowledge, 3) serving the *guru* with respect, 4) following the rules of scripture as approved by the *ācāryas*, 5) inquiring about the ultimate *dharma*, 6) renouncing enjoyment to gain the mercy of the Lord, 6) residing in Dvārakā or other holy places, or near the Gaṅgā, 7) remaining simple in maintaining the body and in general behavior, 8) observing the *Ekādaśī-vrata*, 9) respecting the *āmalakī*, *aśvattha* and other sacred items. `

Of these preliminary ten, the first three are most important. The next ten are perhaps less central to the practice of *bhakti*, but are favorable for its healthy growth, for example, avoiding the association of non-devotees, not becoming subjected to lamentation or other extreme emotions, not showing disrespect to the other *devatās*, not hurting other living beings, not committing any *sevā-aparādha* and so on²⁹⁸. Rūpa Gosvāmī calls these twenty the door to *bhakti*, and then lists another forty-four, such as marking the body with *Vaiṣṇava tilaka*, serving the Tulasī plant, observing *Kārtika-vrata*, and the rest of the famous, known practices within *bhakti*, like *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *smaraṇam*, *vandanam*, *arcanam*, *ātma-nivedanam* and so on. The number of *aṅgas* thus rises to sixty-four. Of all of them, the last five are said to be most important:

²⁹⁸ The full list of the *aṅgas* can be found in Appendix 4.

śraddhā viśeṣataḥ prītiḥ śrī-mūrter aṅghri-sevane
 śrīmad-bhāgavatārthānām āsvādo rasikaiḥ saha
 sajātīyāśaye snigdhe sādhanu saṅgaḥ svato vare
 nāma-saṅkīrtanam śrīman- mathurā-maṇḍale sthitiḥ
 aṅgānām pañcakasyāsya pūrvam vilikhitasya ca
 nikhila-śraiṣṭhya-bodhāya punar apy atra kīrtanam
 durūhādbhuta-vīrye 'smin śraddhā dūre 'stu pañcake
 yatra svalpo 'pi sambandhaḥ sad-dhiyām bhāva-janmane

Serving the Deity with great faith and love, relishing the message of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in the association of sensitive devotees, befriending like-minded superior devotees who are affectionately inclined, performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and residing within *Vraja-maṇḍala*, these five items have been mentioned before, but are repeated again to point out their superiority among all *aṅgas*.

Their potency is inconceivable and astonishing. What to speak of having faith in them, even if there is just a slight contact with these items, persons devoid of offenses can attain the level of *bhāva*. (BRS, 1. 2. 90-93, 238)

Rūpa Gosvāmī lines up a beautiful row of illustrative verses for each of the *aṅgas* (BRS, 1. 2. 97-243). Let us savor the last five examples²⁹⁹. The first one, glorifying the attractive features of Śrī Mūrti, probably refers directly to the worshipable Deity of Rūpa Gosvāmī, Govindadeva (*govindākhyām hari-tanum*), whose temple stands relatively close to Keśī Ghāṭ on the bank of the Yamunā in Vṛndāvana. Of course, the Deity and the Lord Himself are non-different, and the distinction fades into the mystery of His appearance right there on the steps of Keśī Ghāṭ, illuminated by the moonlight:

smerām bhaṅgī-traya-paricitām sāci-vistīrṇa-dṛṣṭīm
 vaṁśī-nyastādhara-kiśalayām ujjalām candrakeṇa
 govindākhyām hari-tanum itaḥ keśī-tīrthopakāṇṭhe
 mā prekṣiṣṭhās tava yadi sakhe bandhu-saṅge 'sti raṅgaḥ

My dear friend, if you are indeed attached to your worldly relations, do not look at the smiling face of Lord Govinda as He stands on the bank of the Yamunā at Keśī Ghāṭ. Casting sidelong glances, He places His flute to His lips, which seem like newly blossomed twigs. His transcendental body, bending in three places, appears very bright in the moonlight. (BRS, 1. 2. 239)

Jīva Gosvāmī comments, "Using his own sweet words, the author, in five verses that follow, expresses his ecstasy about the last five items. By saying, 'Do not look!', the author actually means that one must look at Śrī Kṛṣṇa. 'By experiencing the

²⁹⁹ Examples for the sixty-four *aṅgas* are mostly from the scriptures, but these last five are authored by Rūpa Gosvāmī.

sweetness of the Lord's form, you will consider everything else to be insignificant. Therefore, look at that form of Kṛṣṇa!' This is the intention of the prohibition."

The next illustration praises the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* through *vyāja-stuti* (indirect eulogy) and *aprastuta-praśamsā* (reverted praise), two poetic devices³⁰⁰:

*śaṅke nītāḥ sapadi daśama-skandha-padyāvalīnām
varṇāḥ karṇādhvani pathikatām ānupurvyād bhavadbhiḥ
haṁho ḍimbhāḥ parama-śubhadān hanta dharmārtha-kāmān
yad garhantaḥ sukha-mayam amī mokṣam apy ākṣipanti*

It appears that the sounds of the verses of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* have right now traversed the path of your ears. Oho, you fools! Therefore you are now deriding the most auspicious goals of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*, and dare to reject even *mokṣa*, which is full of happiness! (BRS, 1. 2. 240)

The next example describes a devotee of the Lord and the inspiring influence of his personality:

*dṛg-ambhobhir dhautāḥ pulaka-patalī maṇḍita-tanuḥ
skhalann antaḥ-phullo dadhad atipṛthum vepathum api
dṛśoḥ kakṣāṁ yāvan mama sa puruṣaḥ ko 'py upayayau
na jāne kiṁ tāvan matir iha gṛhe nābhīramate*

Ever since I saw a certain person whose body was washed with his own tears, whose hairs were standing on end, and who stumbled along with a joyous heart while quivering to the extreme, I do not understand why my mind is not happy anymore in my home. (BRS, 1. 2. 241)

The reason for this dawning of *vairāgya* in the observer is the fact is that this particular devotee carries the *bhāva* of Kṛṣṇa-rati, visible by the *sāttvikas* and *anubhāvas*, and the observer who happens to see him is attracted to the devotee himself as well as to the Lord, the object of affection of the devotee. This again proves that the development of Kṛṣṇa-rati depends not on any dramatic relish, but on the simple, potent association of advanced devotees. The next verse glorifies the amazing effects of the holy name, a manifestation of the Lord so supremely dear to the devotees. Since *śravaṇam* and *kīrtanam* are always tied to each other, this verse describes the bliss of both:

³⁰⁰ Jīva Gosvāmī explains *vyāja-stuti* as 'praising an object by criticizing it', and *aprastuta-praśamsā* as 'introducing irrelevant topics in reference to the topic at hand, such as praising the effect instead of the cause, praising the cause instead of the effect, praising the general instead of the particular, or praising the particular instead of the general, or stating the similarity'. All of the verses are full of alliteration (repetition of the same syllables or letters) and other poetic embellishments.

*yad-avadhi mama śītā vaiṇikenānugītā
 śruti-patham agha-śatror nāmā-gāthā prayātā
 anavakalita-pūrvām hanta kām apy avasthām
 tad-avadhi dadhad-antar-mānasaṁ śāmyatīva*

Ever since the cool songs of the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa sung by Nārada, the player of the *vīṇā*, have entered the path of my ears, I have fallen into an amazing state never experienced before, and my mind has become pacified. (BRS, 1. 2. 242)

Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the state described in the verse (*kām apy avasthām*) is *prema*. The songs about the Lord are cooling because they satisfy the thirst of the devotees for hearing about the Lord, and because they calm down the heat of mundane life. The last of the five examples describes the beauty of Mathurā-*maṇḍala* (referring to both the city of Mathurā and the broader Vraja-*maṇḍala*). One can only imagine its beauty in the days gone by:

*taṭa-bhuvi kṛta-kāntiḥ śyāmalā yās taṭinyāḥ
 sphuṭita-nava-kadambāmbi-kūjad-dvirephā
 niravadhi-madhurimṇā maṇḍiteyaṁ katham te
 manasi kam api bhāvaṁ kānana-śrīs tanoti*

The splendor of the forest of Vṛndāvana is beautified due to its being situated on the banks of the Yamunā, where buzzing bumble-bees cling to the newly blooming *kadamba* flowers. It is decorated with unlimited sweetness. How is it that it produces such an inexplicable emotion in my heart? (BRS, 1. 2. 243)

The commentators ascribe the appearance of the inexplicable *bhāva* in the heart of a devotee to the fact that the forest of Vṛndāvana is intimately connected with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is present in it, and who is also non-different from it. The point is further developed in the next verse:

*alaukika-padārthānām acintya-śaktir idṛśī
 bhāvaṁ tad-viṣayaṁ cāpi yā sahaiva prakāśayet*

The inconceivable power of these extraordinary five *aṅgas* is such that they will manifest both *bhāva* and the object of *bhāva*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, at the same time [in the heart of a devotee]. (BRS, 1. 2. 244)

Rūpa Gosvāmī declares that *rati* (*bhāva*) is the main fruit of the practice of the various *aṅgas* of devotion, even though other lesser fruits have been mentioned in the *śāstras* to encourage those on lower levels of understanding. Similarly, although *śāstric* evidence can be found where *varṇāśrama-dharma* is included within *bhakti*, Rūpa Gosvāmī insists that it is a preliminary level leading to *bhakti*, but is not its

direct *aṅga*³⁰¹. In the works of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya*, *bhakti* is always clearly kept on a separate level, on its own supreme pedestal far above *karma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, *yoga*, *sāṅkhya* and so on.

*jñāna-vairāgyayor bhakti- praveśāyopayogitā
īṣat prathamam eveti nāṅgatvam ucitaṁ tayoh
yad ubhe citta-kāṭhinya- hetū prāyaḥ satāṁ mate
sukumāra-svabhāveyaṁ bhaktis tad-dhetur īritā
kintu jñāna-virakty-ādi- sādhyāṁ bhaktyaiva siddhyati*

Jñāna and *vairāgya* are suitable for entering *bhakti*, being somewhat useful in the beginning stages of *bhakti*, but they are not considered *aṅgas* of *bhakti*.

Because these two practices (*jñāna* and *vairāgya*) generally make the heart hard, the authoritative devotees have concluded that *bhakti* alone, whose nature is very tender, is the cause of entering into *bhakti*.

However, the goals of *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and other processes can be achieved by *bhakti* itself. (BRS, 1. 2. 248-9, 51)

Rūpa Gosvāmī and his commentators quote amply from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to substantiate their position, and declare that the function of *vairāgya* – to slacken one's attachment to matter – is taken over by *bhakti* itself on the devotional path: there is no need for extraneous detachment when strong attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa easily overrides all other attachments. The final position of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī on *vairāgya* is a pair of verses famous for their high level of applicability in the everyday life of devotees: *vairāgya* can either be utilitarian, in a positive sense, with the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord as its object, or it can be a debilitating 'attachment to being detached', a mere *vairāgya* for the sake of *vairāgya*, which is obviously detrimental to the purpose of *bhakti*.

*anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayujjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate
prāpañcikatayā buddhyā hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ
mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo vairāgyaṁ phalgu kathyate*

The *vairāgya* of that person who employs objects suitable for devotional development, while remaining detached from them, is said to be suitable for *bhakti*. The objects should be persistently related to Kṛṣṇa.

³⁰¹ An example of such śāstric reference would be: *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (3. 8. 9): *varṇāśramācāravatā puruṣeṇa paraḥ pumān / viṣṇur ārādhyate panthā nānyat tat-toṣa-kāraṇam*, "The Supreme Lord Viṣṇu is to be worshipped by human beings through the duties of *varṇāśrama*. There is no other path for satisfying the Lord." To counter this verse, Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (11. 20. 9): *tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā / mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*, "One should continue to perform the daily and periodic *varṇāśrama* activities until one becomes detached from mundane life and develops faith for hearing and chanting about Me."

But when those who strive for liberation reject objects related to Hari, imagining them to be material, that is called worthless or false *vairāgya*. (BRS, 1. 2. 255-6)

Rūpa Gosvāmī comments that *jñāna* and *vairāgya* have been excluded from pure *bhakti* already in its definition (*jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*, BRS, 1. 1. 11), but the point is repeated here for the sake of clarity, distinguishing between valuable, *yukta-vairāgya*, and the false, *phalgu-vairāgya*, which is discouraged. He lists a few other situations not accepted as parts of *bhakti*: service effected with the assistance of disciples and great wealth is not counted as an *aṅga* of pure *bhakti*, since its grandeur, and the fact that others are employed in its execution, is opposed to the very nature of *bhakti*. Ethical restraints, general rules of conduct and other qualifications like *viveka* are considered natural and concomitant in a serious devotee, and are not counted separately as *aṅgas* of *bhakti*. Concluding the discussion on the *aṅgas* of *bhakti*, Rūpa Gosvāmī states that their effect is produced by either taking shelter of one of them in a major fashion, or of many of them simultaneously.

7. 2. 3. *Rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti*

Now, Rūpa Gosvāmī turns to the treatment of *rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti*, the stage of *bhakti* practice characterized by being no longer inspired by scriptural advice but by one's own awakened *rāga*, attachment to the Lord.

*virājantīm abhivyaktām vraja-vāsī janādiṣu
rāgātmikām anusṛtā yā sā rāgānugocyate
iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ paramāviṣṭatā bhavet
tan-mayī yā bhaved bhaktiḥ sātra rāgātmikocyate
sā kāma-rūpā sambandha- rūpā ceti bhaved dvidhā*

Rāgānuga-bhakti is defined as that *bhakti* which follows the *rāgātmikā-bhakti*, manifest brilliantly in the inhabitants of Vraja.

Rāga is defined as spontaneous, deep thirst for the object of love, and absorption in it. *Bhakti* that is impelled exclusively by this overwhelming passion is called *rāgātmikā-bhakti*.

It is divided into two types: *kāma-rūpā*, impelled by conjugal feelings, and *sambandha-rūpā*, impelled by other relationships. (BRS, 1. 2. 270, 72, 73)

Jīva Gosvāmī points out that *kāma-rūpā*, being a special kind of a relationship, is actually a subdivision of *sambandha-rūpā*. It is singled out because of its being the highest relationship, like a king among them (*bhakti-rasa-rāt*). He compares it to

saying, 'Everyone is coming, and the king is also coming.' Although the king is already included in the word 'everyone', he is singled out because of his importance.

At this point, Rūpa Gosvāmī introduces the famous series of verses from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (7. 1. 26-32)³⁰², about the five categories of devotees who have been attracted to Kṛṣṇa, and have achieved perfection through various spontaneous emotions: the *gopīs* through so-called *kāma*, Kāṁsa through fear (*bhaya*), Śiśupāla through envy (*dveṣa*), the Vṛṣṇis (which includes the residents of Vraja) through a relationship with Him (*sambandha*), the Pāṇḍavas through affection (*sneha*), and the general devotees through their *vaidhī-bhakti*. Two of these are clearly inimical to Kṛṣṇa (*bhaya* and *dveṣa*) and despite their amazingly overwhelming nature in characters such as Kāṁsa and Śiśupāla, such emotions cannot be accepted as favorable *bhakti*. The destination of such hostile souls immersed in consciousness of the Lord is still extraordinary, they usually attain *sāyujya-mukti*, merging with the Lord's effulgence. Favorable relationships of course fructify much more gloriously in perpetual association with the Lord in any of the Vaikuṇṭha abodes, or Goloka-dhāma. If *sneha* in the above verses denotes *sakhyā*, then it is part of *vaidhī-bhakti*, but if it denotes a level of *prema*, it is included in *rāgānugā-bhakti*.

Rūpa Gosvāmī defines *kāma-rūpā-bhakti* as an intense desire to be in the association of the beloved and to please Him in all respects. This distinguishes the so-called *kāma* of the *gopīs* from lower forms of almost mundane *kāma* as exemplified by the hunchbacked lady in Mathurā³⁰³. While the *gopīs* experience great anxiety day and night thinking of Kṛṣṇa's welfare and pleasure, the hunchbacked lady in Mathurā simply pulled at Kṛṣṇa's upper cloth and made Him laugh at her explicit amorousness. The love of the *gopīs* is known as *prema*, and the word *kāma* is inadequate in many ways. Even Uddhava and other advanced *Vaiṣṇavas* yearn to attain the levels of self-abnegation seen in the *gopīs*:

*yat the sujāta caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu
bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaṣeṣu
tenātavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kiṁ svit
kūrpadibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyusāṁ naḥ*

O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path. (Bhāg. 10. 31. 19, quoted in BRS, 1. 2. 284, in the commentary of Jīva Gosvāmī)

³⁰² These verses were already discussed in Chapter 4 under the theory of *bhakti-rasa* in Bopadeva's *Muktāphala*.

³⁰³ She is said to possess a slight *rati* because the object of her attraction is Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The *sambandha-rūpā* kind of *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is inspired by great absorption arising from identifying oneself as the parent, friend or servant of Govinda. It is found in the residents of Vraja, who all have a predominance of *rāga* for the Lord, without the admixture of reverence for Him (as is the case in Dvārakā and Mathurā)³⁰⁴. *Kāma-rūpā* and *sambandha-rūpā* kinds of *rāgātmikā-bhakti* are therefore two general role models for devotees wishing to emulate the standards of love found in these eternal associates of the Lord. We thus get two divisions of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, *kāmānugā-* and *sambandhānugā-bhakti*.

A candidate for *rāgānugā-bhakti* possesses a strong greed for obtaining the *bhāva* similar to that of the inhabitants of Vraja. After hearing about the perfect sentiments of the Vraja-*vāsīs*, such a person may develop a disregard for regulative scriptures³⁰⁵, and pursues his greed by focusing exclusively on the scriptural descriptions of the love of the Vraja-*vāsīs*.

*yad-avadhi mama kācin mañjarī rūpa-pūrvā
vraja-bhuvi bata netra-dvandva-dīptim cakāra
tad-avadhi tava vṛndāraṇya-rajñi prakāmaṁ
caraṇa-kamala-lākṣā-sandidṛkṣā mamābhūt*

O Queen of Vṛndāvana! Ever since a certain *mañjarī* named Rūpa anointed my eyes with light here in the land of Vraja, a deep desire has arisen within my heart to see the red dye of Your lotus feet. (*Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, verse 14)

Devotees on the stage of *vaidhī-bhakti* depend on regulative scriptures until their *bhāva* arises, which is equal to greed for attaining the perfection of *prema*. Such greed makes the devotee focus internally on the exemplary models of Kṛṣṇa-*prema* like the *gopīs*, the *gopas*, or mother Yaśodā, while externally remaining engaged in the regulated practices of devotion like *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, following the inspiring examples of the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. The candidate is advised to intelligently choose from among the possible *aṅgas* of *bhakti* all those which are favorable to the development of his internal sentiment, and eschew those which go against his spiritual nature.

Within *kāmānugā-bhakti*, two possibilities exist. Some candidates are inclined towards attaining the personal association with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, while others merely wish to assist the Divine couple and the leading *sakhīs* like Lalitā and Viśākhā. The second variety is much superior due to the selflessness and innocence of such

³⁰⁴ Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura argues in his commentary that the words *sambandhād vṛṣṇayaḥ* (Bhāg. 7. 1. 31) actually refers to the inhabitants of Vraja, and that the Vṛṣṇis are included in the *bhaktiyā vāyam* variety. The reason is, as stated above, the fact that the Vraja-*vāsīs* possess a more intimate kind of *rāga* in relation to the Lord, characterized by a lack of awareness of His extraordinary prowess.

³⁰⁵ Viśvanātha Cakravartī comments that the disregard for scriptures may not always happen, in other words, some devotees develop the greed but do not begin to disregard the scriptures.

participants in the divine *līlā*. The young *gopīs* called *mañjarīs*, of whom Rūpa Mañjarī is the leader, perform menial services for Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, without the slightest desire for enjoying the relationship in a selfish way.

*prasīda vasanāñcalaṁ mama vimuñca nirmañchanaṁ
vrajāmi nanu nirdaya sphurati paśya sandhyorjitā
vidaty api tavonnataṁ guṇam upāharam manda-dhiḥ
srajaṁ priya-sakhī-girā vraja-pate na te dūṣaṇam*

[Rati Mañjarī has brought a garland made by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but He, instead of appreciating the flower garland, pulls the edge of her sari. She responds:] O merciless one, be pleased! Let go of my garment! Look, the sun is setting, I have to go to the *āratī*. It is not Your fault, o master of Vraja, that Your slow brain is not able to appreciate the message of my Mistress, and that You slight Her valuable gift. (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 14. 58)

Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions that both men and women are qualified to hanker after the *bhāvas* of the eternally perfect *gopīs*, and that even men are able to develop the necessary qualification. Needless to say, their internal development of such *bhāvas* has nothing to do with external shows of feminine qualities or even female dress, as is sometimes seen in India. The example from the scriptures is that of the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya who became extremely attracted to the form of Lord Rāma and desired to establish a conjugal relationship with Him. They consequently attained forms of ladies in Gokula and their desire was fulfilled.

Yearning for relationships other than conjugal is called *sambandhānugā-bhakti*, and the exemplary models for it are Vraja-*vāsīs* in the roles of servants, friends and elders of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The generalization of sentiments of the exemplary models in the heart of the *sādhaka* should only go as far as the sameness of sentiment, and should not be an imagination of equality or identity with the models. For example, those desiring to develop a friendly relationship with the Lord may closely emulate the mood of Subala, but never imagine to be Subala himself.

The practice of *rāgānugā-bhakti-sādhana* leads to the awakening of *bhāva*, either through persistent practice which pleases the Lord, or by any extraordinary mercy of the Lord and the devotees. The illuminating effulgence of *bhāva*, which is a ray of the sun of *prema*, or compared to a bud which will blossom into *prema*, is discernible by the presence of the following signs:

*kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ viraktir māna-sūnyatā
āśā-bandhaḥ samutkaṇṭhā nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ
āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne prītis tad-vasati-sthale
ity ādayo 'nubhāvāḥ syur jāta-bhāvāṅkure jane*

The characteristics of one who has developed a bud of *bhāva* are: tolerance, not wasting time, detachment from enjoyment, pridelessness, confidence in the Lord's mercy, longing for the Lord, constant taste for chanting the name of the Lord, attachment to discussing about the Lord's qualities, and attachment to living in the abode of the Lord. (BRS, 1. 3. 25-26)

Rūpa Gosvāmī makes sure that perfection is not understood in a superficial way, jumping over the hard-earned qualifications to the more exciting part of it, the identification with an associate of the Lord.

7. 2. 4. *Entering the Divine Drama*

The advancement of a *sādhaka* beyond the level of *bhāva* is an amazing meeting of the material and spiritual nature, where acts seemingly done with material senses and objects imperceptibly become spiritually surcharged. Both one's *bhāva* and the Lord are spiritual by nature, full of inconceivable *hlādinī-śakti*, through which the spiritual reality is revealed to the practitioner. The purified soul witnesses the blossoming of its own original, effulgent spiritual form, covered since time immemorial with the forgetfulness of and aversion to the Lord. Ontologically, *sādhana-bhakti* would be impotent if it would not be able to reach beyond the world of matter, but it acts as an extraordinary bridge between matter and spirit. Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes from the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*nāma-cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇa śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ
ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

The name of the Lord, 'Kṛṣṇa', is a wish-fulfilling gem. It is the very form of Kṛṣṇa, full of consciousness and *rasa*. It is complete in itself, supremely pure and eternally liberated, due to its being identical with Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Therefore material senses are unable to appreciate the fully spiritual entities like Kṛṣṇa's holy name (*nāma*), form (*rūpa*), qualities (*guṇa*) and pastimes (*līlā*). When a *sādhaka* eagerly renders service to the Lord by using his tongue and other senses to chant the Lord's holy name and so on, then the name, form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord manifest to him by their own sweet will. (*Padma Purāṇa*, quoted in BRS, 1. 2. 233-4)

The Gaudīya understanding of the position of the fallen *jīvas* is that their taste for *bhakti* is distorted due to deep aversion to the Lord, and the process of recovery is likened to becoming cured of jaundice. A patient infected with jaundice cannot

taste anything sweet, but by taking sugar candy, which is the cure for jaundice, he is relieved of his disease and finally able to taste the sweetness of sugar again. In the same way, the practice of *bhakti* may at first seem unnatural and sometimes difficult to perform, but simply by persisting the heart is purified to the extent that *bhakti* again becomes natural for the soul, and all elements of the experience of *bhakti* are revealed in their actual sweetness.

syāt kṛṣṇa-nāma-caritādi-sitāpy avidyā-
pittopatapta-rāsanasya na rocikā nu
kintv ādarād anudinaṁ khalu saiva juṣṭā
svādvī kramād bhavati tad-gada-mūla-hantrī

The holy name, character, pastimes and activities of Kṛṣṇa are all transcendently sweet like sugar candy. Although the tongue of one afflicted by the jaundice of *avidyā* (ignorance) cannot taste anything sweet, it is wonderful that simply by carefully chanting these sweet names every day, a natural relish awakens within his tongue, and his disease is gradually destroyed at the root. (*Upadeśāmṛta*, verse 7)

At this point, we may try to discuss the nature of the famous *siddha-deha*, which is usually translated as ‘spiritual form’, ‘constitutional form’, or, in some academic works, ‘perfected body’. The word body perhaps leans too much on the physical side, and the use of the past participle, ‘perfected’, also immediately strikes one as inadequate. The spiritual form does not undergo any formation and progressive change, it is merely revealed and awakened. D. L. Haberman devoted a book to *rāgānugā-bhakti-sādhana*, entitled *Acting as a Way of Salvation*, comparing the *rāgānugā-sādhana* to entering the divine drama of Kṛṣṇa-līlā. True, there are *Gauḍīya śāstras* which deal in a detailed manner with the *ekādaśa-bhāva* or *siddha-praṇālī*³⁰⁶, the bestowal of the sacred spiritual identity upon the worthy disciple, but in the midst of Kali-yuga such qualified pairs of *gurus* and disciples are sadly rare. Therefore, the *Gauḍīya ācāryas* of today prefer to relinquish the judgment of qualification to the holy name and the Lord Himself, who is Himself more than able to reveal the spiritual identity to each practitioner and / or his *guru*, in any of the known or unknown ways. The revelation may be a combination of one’s own intuition, hints and directions from the *guru* and senior *Vaiṣṇavas*, and so on, but always remains exceedingly personal and subdued, far from the destructive proudish exposure.

The too easily available possibility of instant entrance into Kṛṣṇa-līlā, offered by some of the hardly discriminating merciful *gurus* in Vraja today, makes the attainment seem cheap. Such ventures into the heights of spirituality usually end in

³⁰⁶ In the works of Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī, Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Today, however, the practice seems mostly associated with the circle of *bābājīs* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. We will not discuss their eligibility, or the eligibility of their disciples.

a catastrophe for the naïve practitioner, who goes along as long as the fascination lasts, and struggles to endure the demanding meditations without the proper foundation of firm *rāga*. Entering the spiritual world has to be approached in an extremely thoughtful, careful manner, it is the supremely demanding task not to be pompously advertized. But it is important to note that the identity is not self-chosen in the ordinary sense, of the conditioned covered entity choosing a role one happens to like best. It could be arrived at by oneself, but not necessarily, just as it is not necessarily revealed by the *guru*. Often, the revelation happens quite a bit later in life than many would desire, or is like a sudden grace at the fag end of one's life, when one finally feels justified and encouraged to pursue internal meditation in a sustained manner. Needless to say, such glorious terminations of one's worldly existence are preceded by years, often lifetimes of preparation and gradual disentanglement from the vicious circle of *karma*.

These implications have not been clearly discussed in Haberman's work, and so the reviewers of his book struggle to grasp the concept. Edward C. Dimock, in his introduction to Haberman's book, writes:

Haberman points out to us that the English word 'play' has several meanings. It signifies 'game' or 'drama', both of which are segments of action sometimes only metaphorically related to reality, defined and structured in such a way as to be made comprehensible in abbreviated time and space. But the Sanskrit word *līlā*, which is also usually translated 'play', has an additional connotation, for it suggests the vast and unknowable mind of God, only tiny bits of which can be understood by our impoverished human processes. As a game imposes rules on random behavior, or as a drama editorializes upon segments of human experience, so the reality of human life is a definable fragment of the Real. The relationship is not metaphor but metonymy: by participation in the real one participates also in the Real. The trick is to understand that. And since one's small mind is not capable, one enters the play of God, the *līlā*, by means of drama. One understands a small part of the mind of God by directed experience, by playing one's role on what is, ultimately, the divine stage.

Nor are there auditions for the parts. Everyone has a role, *and it is self-selected* [emphasis mine]. The play was written long ago, before time began. It is the play of Kṛṣṇa, made known on earth through the text called the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and it is infinite. There are roles for all who choose to be devoted, who are willing to train themselves until they understand that they are, in fact, in the world of the Real, the friends or parents or servants or – most significantly – the lovers, of God. Because the drama is divine, the stage is eternity, the time frame is no longer act and scene. The real world and the Real world are revealed to be the same.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ D. L. Haberman, *Acting as a Way of Salvation – A Study of Rāgānugā Bhakti Sādhana* (Delhi, 2001), Foreword by Prof. Edward C. Dimock, pp. vii-viii.

On the back cover of the book, a short excerpt is published, of a review by Rupert Snell:

Haberman's concentration on the notion of a 'paradigmatic individual' is indeed original (even though the 'and there we have it' style of presentation is occasionally overdone); his treatment of the *aṣṭa-yāma* routine of devotions, and the ways in which roles for acolytes are determined by their mentors (somewhat belying Edward Dimock's statement in the Foreword that 'Everyone has a role, and it is self-selected') adds greatly to our knowledge of contemporary practice.

My impression is that Haberman's coverage of the revelation of the spiritual form lacks that tangible taste of its real-ness, liveliness and the sheer wonder of it, which are all amply experienced in a properly monitored progress towards the supreme goal. By focusing on groups who hurry with perfection, he has misrepresented the great majority of the *Gauḍīya* world which is extremely cautious about the highest stages of devotional perfection, and values them so highly that descriptions of their attainment hardly ever surface in academic, or even *sampradāyik* reading materials.

❧ *Chapter Eight* ❧

The Aprākṛta-nāyaka

8. 1. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Nāyaka-cūḍamaṇi³⁰⁸

As in the case of *rasas*, Rūpa Gosvāmī masterfully borrows the concept of dramatic heroes from the classical theory, to employ it in the description of the Lord of his heart. In the opening chapter of his *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, a compendium of definitions and examples for the dramaturgical skeleton of *Vaiṣṇavite nāṭakas*, he naturally limits the themes to the pastimes of the Lord and His devotees. He follows a classical division of heroes into *divya*, *divyādivya* and *adivya*, and personifies them in Śrī Kṛṣṇa for the *divya*, Śrī Rāma for the *divyādivya*, and Yudhiṣṭhira for the *adivya* variety³⁰⁹.

In the first chapter of his *Ujvala-nīlamaṇi*, Rūpa Gosvāmī makes a very sharp difference between ordinary heroes of mundane poetic works and Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the *aprākṛta-nāyaka*, the supreme hero untouched by matter (be it in the context of drama, poetry or Kṛṣṇa-līlā in general). He quotes a few famous verses on the subject, which are used as a counter-argument against those who would see the relation between Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the *upapāti* and the *gopīs* as *parodhā-nāyikās* as an example of *anaucitya* (impropriety). Rūpa Gosvāmī sternly differentiates between worldly relations of this kind which are surely most condemnable, but gives a sound theological basis to the spiritual relation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* of Vraja. The history of how the *sampradāya* dealt with such a difficult issue in the midst of its philosophy is an interesting topic.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, although positioned far above mundane heroes as the *aprākṛta-nāyaka*, can nevertheless be described by the categories of *nāyakas* in the classical dramatic theory. In his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī applies all the traditional varieties of a hero (the *dhīra-lalita*, the *dhīra-sānta*, the *dhīroddhata* and the *dhīrodātta*) to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the various phases and localities of His *līlā*. Needless to say, traditionally only one variety was personified in a certain dramatic character. But Rūpa Gosvāmī argues that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being the reservoir of a multitude of loving relationships with His devotees, can sometimes manifest a predominance of qualities characteristic of one of these four types of heroes, and at other times a predominance of the qualities of another. The examples and distinct attributes of all four will be given below.

Like Jayadeva in his *Gīta-govinda*, Rūpa Gosvāmī also treats Śrī Rādhā (and the rest of the *gopīs* and consorts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) as the *nāyikās* or heroines. In his works, mainly in the *Ujvala-nīlamaṇi*, he chalks out an elaborate classification of the *avasthās* and *nāyikā-bheda*s applicable to their states of being. In this chapter we will attempt a comparative study of the concepts he uses, and how he modifies them to suit a transcendent situation.

³⁰⁸ This is how Viśvanātha Cakravartī describes Him in the opening of his *Ujvala-nīlamaṇi-kiraṇa*, a short overview of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujvala-nīlamaṇi*.

³⁰⁹ *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, verses 7, 8. I use the edition prepared by Babulal Shukla Shastri (Varanasi, 1964).

8. 1. 1. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Ālambana-vibhāva of Bhakti-rasa

The *vibhāva-laharī* of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is a detailed description of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *ālambana-vibhāva* of all *bhakti-rasas*.

tatra śrī-kṛṣṇaḥ –
nāyakānām śīro-ratnaṁ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
yatra nityatayā sarve virājante mahā-guṇāḥ
so 'nya-rūpa-svarūpābhyām asminn ālambano mataḥ

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord Himself, is the crest jewel of heroes, in whom all great qualities shine eternally. He is considered the *ālambana-vibhāva*, or the support of *rati* (*viśaya*) through His *svarūpa* and other forms He may assume. (BRS, 2. 1. 17)

The *vibhāva-laharī* continues with an enumeration of His attractive qualities³¹⁰. His qualities, Jīva Gosvāmī explains, function in two ways: they are either primary or secondary. If they are primary, for example, if we speak about Kṛṣṇa who has beautiful limbs, these qualities (beautiful limbs) themselves act as *uddīpanas*. But if they are secondary to His overall personality, and He Himself is the focus of attention, then the qualities are merely part of Him as the *ālambana-vibhāva*. Rūpa Gosvāmī first enumerates such qualities intrinsic in His personality. Their number is sixty-four, and the first fifty are qualities which can also be present in the ordinary *jīvas* in minute quantities, now and then³¹¹. The next five qualities, which are unattainable to the *jīvas*, are found in Lord Śiva, and the next five in Lord Viṣṇu. The supreme repository of all the sixty, however, is only Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is famous for another set of four qualities that sets Him apart from all other incarnations and expansions of Himself. Rūpa Gosvāmī acknowledges that the list has been collated from the enumerations of the Lord's qualities found in the *Purāṇas*, especially in the *Bhāgavata*³¹².

³¹⁰ A numbered list of the Sanskrit terms for all the sixty-four qualities along with their English translations is supplied in Appendix 5.

³¹¹ Especially upon making a conscious endeavor to embody His qualities, or being blessed to possess them, by becoming His devotees.

³¹² Rūpa Gosvāmī refers to a list in Bhāg. 1. 16. 27-30, where Bhūmī, personified as a cow, describes the qualities of Kṛṣṇa to Dharma, personified as a bull. A Bengali scholar Rita Banerjee, in her study of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, makes a detailed comparison between this list of qualities in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the list compiled by Rūpa Gosvāmī. She takes into account all major commentaries on the *Bhāgavata*, those of Śrīdhara Svāmī, Vallabhācārya, Vīrarāghava Ācārya and so on, comparing their differing glosses on each quality. Some of the qualities easily overlap, and can be considered as included in each other. Rita Banerjee, *The Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu – A Critical Study* (Varanasi, 2008), pp. 63-73.

atha tad-guṇāḥ –
ayaṁ netā suramyāṅgaḥ sarva-sal-lakṣaṇānvitaḥ
ruciras tejasā yukto balīyān vayasānvitaḥ
vividhādbhuta-bhāṣā-vit satya-vākyah priyaṁ vadaḥ
vāvadūkaḥ supāṇḍityo buddhimān pratibhānvitaḥ
vidagdhaś caturō dakṣaḥ kṛtajñāḥ sudṛdha-vrataḥ
deśa-kāla-supātra-jñāḥ śāstra-cakṣuḥ śucir vaśī
sthiro dāntaḥ kṣamā-śīlo gambhīro dhṛtimān samaḥ
vadānyo dhārmikaḥ śūraḥ karuṇo mānya-māna-kṛt
dakṣiṇo vinayī hrīmān śaraṇāgata-pālakaḥ
sukhī bhakta-suhṛt prema-vaśyaḥ sarva-śubhāṅkaraḥ
pratāpī kīrtimān rakta-lokaḥ sādhu-samāśrayaḥ
nārī-gaṇa-manohārī sarvāradyaḥ samṛddhimān
varīyān īśvaraś ceti guṇās tasyānukīrtitāḥ
samudrā iva pañcāśad durvigāhā harer amī

The hero Kṛṣṇa has beautiful limbs, has all auspicious bodily features, is pleasing to behold, possesses vitality, is strong and is endowed with ideal age.

He understands a variety of astonishing languages, is truthful, speaks in a pleasing manner, is eloquent, learned, intelligent, and filled with new ideas.

He is aesthetic, clever, skilful, and grateful. He keeps His vows, is expert at discerning the different times, places and persons, sees through the eyes of *śāstra*, is pure and controls His senses.

He is persevering, patient, tolerant, inscrutable, steadfast, uniform, generous, virtuous, heroic, compassionate, and respectful to persons worthy of respect.

He is compliant, modest, bashful, the protector of those who take shelter of Him, happy, friend of the devotees, controlled by love, and the benefactor of all.

He is glorious, renowned, the object of attraction for all, the shelter of the devotees, attractive to women, worshipable by all, and endowed with the greatest wealth.

He is the most important and the supreme controller. These forty qualities of Kṛṣṇa which have been listed above are difficult to fathom, like the ocean. (BRS, 2. 1. 23-29)

The next four qualities which the Supreme Lord shares with Lord Śiva, are: 1) *sadā svarūpa-samprāpta*, He is always situated in His eternal form, 2) *sarva-jña*, He is omniscient, 3) *nitya-nūdana*, He is forever young and new, 4) *sac-cid-ānanda-sāndrāṅga*, His form consists of condensed eternity, knowledge and bliss, 5) *sarva-siddhi-niṣevita*, He is served by all possible *siddhis*.

In the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Lord Śiva is compared to yogurt while the Supreme Lord is likened to milk; the two are non-different³¹³, but only Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Kṛṣṇa

³¹³ *kṣīraṁ yathā dadhi vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ / yaḥ sambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*, "Just as milk is transformed into curd by the action of acids, but yet the effect curd is neither same as, nor different from, its cause, viz., milk, so I adore the primeval Lord Govinda of whom the state of Śambhu is a transformation for the performance of the work of destruction." (*Brahma-saṁhitā*, 5. 45)

possess the direct potency of liberating the living beings from the shackles of *saṁsāra*. The potency of Lord Śiva is in this sense indirect, for he directs the *jīvas* worthy or desirous of liberation to the shelter of his own worshipable Lord. Due to his constant meditation and supreme advancement in *bhakti*, Lord Śiva is the repository of a great quantity of the Lord's amazing qualities³¹⁴.

The next five qualities are common to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His Viṣṇu expansions³¹⁵: 1) *avicintya-mahā-śakti*, He is the possessor of inconceivable great energies, 2) *koṭi-brahmāṇḍa-vigraha*, His form expands over millions of universes, 3) *avatārāvalī-bija*, He is the seed of all incarnations, 4) *hatāri-gati-dāyaka*, He blesses even His enemies with perfection, 5) *ātmārāma-gaṇākārṣī*, He attracts even the sages who are self-satisfied. These qualities, although astonishing in themselves, become even more astonishing when found in the personality of Kṛṣṇa. Jīva Gosvāmī explains that the reason is the fact that the Lord appears as if an ordinary human being, while still possessing these wonderful powers and qualities.

The last four of the sixty-four qualities are the exclusive domain of Kṛṣṇa: 1) He is an ocean filled with the waves of the most astonishing displays of pastimes, 2) He is surrounded by loving devotees filled with incomparable sweet *prema*, 3) He plays sweet notes on His flute which attract the minds of everyone in the three worlds, 4) He astonishes all moving and non-moving entities with the beauty of His form which has no equal or superior. In compact terms, these last four are usually known as *līlā-mādhurya*, *prema-mādhurya*, *veṇu-mādhurya* and *rūpa-mādhurya*.

All of the sixty-four qualities are supported with examples, either the author's own poetry or citations from the scriptures. For example, he draws from the *Padyāvalī*, an anthology of verses on Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti*, an illustration of Kṛṣṇa as *pratibhānvita* (filled with new ideas, quick-witted)³¹⁶:

³¹⁴ The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* reveals Lord Śiva's position as the greatest of all *Vaiṣṇavas* in a verse of the Twelfth Canto: *nimna-gānām yathā gaṅgā devānām acyuto yathā / vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ purāṇānām idam tathā*, "Just as the Gaṅgā is the greatest of all rivers, Lord Acyuta the supreme among worshipable deities and Lord Śambhu [Śiva] the greatest of *Vaiṣṇavas*, so *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the greatest of all *Purāṇas*." (Bhāg. 12. 13. 16) It shows him to be a devotee of Viṣṇu in the account of teaching the Pracetās, saintly sons of King Prācinabarhi, in the Fourth Canto: *atha bhāgavatā yūyam priyāḥ stha bhagavān yathā na mad bhāgavatānām ca preyān anyo 'sti karhicit*, "You are all devotees of the Lord, and as such I appreciate that you are as respectable as the Supreme Person Himself. I know in this way that the devotees also respect me and that I am dear to them. Thus no one can be as dear to the devotees as I am." (Bhāg. 4. 24. 30)

³¹⁵ Quite the opposite to the philosophy of the *Śrī-sampradāya* which considers Lord Viṣṇu as the repository of all incarnations including Kṛṣṇa, the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* follow the statements of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* about the supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In Jīva Gosvāmī's *Sandarbhās*, great emphasis is given to this point, following a famous verse from the *Bhāgavata* (1. 3. 28), after the enumeration of various incarnations: *ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*, "All these incarnations are plenary expansions and parts of plenary expansions of the Supreme, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality."

³¹⁶ This is just one of the qualities that defies a good English translation. Many more of them are complex notions which are unfortunately reduced to only one of its many facets in the translations,

*vāsaḥ samprati keśava kva bhavato mugdhekṣaṇe nanv idam
vāsaṁ brūhi śaṭha prakāma-subhage tvad-gātra-saṁsargataḥ
yāminyām uṣitaḥ kva dhūrta vitanur muṣṇāti kiṁ yāminī
śaurir gopa-vadhūṁ chalaiḥ parihasan evaṁ-vidhaiḥ pātu vaḥ*³¹⁷

Rādhā said: O Keśava, where is Your dress (*vāsa*)? Kṛṣṇa answered: O captivated lady, My residence (*vāsa*) is in Your eyes. Rādhā insisted: My dear cunning boy, I did not ask about Your residence, but about Your dress. Kṛṣṇa answered: My dear fortunate girl, my fragrance (*vāsa*) is from My contact with Your body. Rādhā is tired: Just where did You spend the night (*yāminyām uṣitaḥ*), You rascal? Kṛṣṇa (taking the question to have been *yāminyā muṣitaḥ*) replies: How could night (*yāminī*), which has no body, steal me (*muṣṇāti*)? May Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who joked in these ways with Rādhārāṇī, protect you! (*Padyāvalī* 283, quoted in BRS, 2. 1. 83)³¹⁸

Upon completing the survey of His qualities, Rūpa Gosvāmī admits that the Lord is *samasta-vividhāścārya-kalyāṇa-guṇa-vāridhi*, ‘a veritable ocean of all kinds of amazing auspicious virtues’, and that he only attempted to present a glimpse of them. Calling the Lord the *netṛ-sikhāmaṇi*, ‘the crest jewel of all heroes’, he proceeds to describe His three stages of perfection. Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā, Hastināpura, Kurukṣetra, Avanti and Mathurā is called either perfect (*pūrṇa*) or more perfect (*pūrṇatara*)³¹⁹, while in Gokula, He is called the most perfect (*pūrṇatama*). In Vraja, due to the highest levels of love of His devotees, He displays the fullness of His

that is why it is good to keep in mind the Sanskrit originals. The word *pratibhānvita* is translated by Bhaktivedānta Swami as ‘genius’, by Bhānu Swami as ‘filled with new ideas’ and ‘possessed with creativity’, and by Haberman as ‘witty’. *Pratibhā* is a term usually connected with the notion of poetic genius, poetic imagination or poetic fancy in the classical poetic theory.

³¹⁷ I follow Bhānu Swami’s version of the verse, Haberman has a slightly different last line: *ity evaṁ gopa-vadhūṁ chalaiḥ parihasan kṛṣṇaś ciraṁ pātu vaḥ*. The edition of *Padyāvalī* in my possession conforms with the version of Bhānu Swami.

³¹⁸ I consulted the *Nectar of Devotion* for the translation of the verse, while Bhānu Swami and Haberman both follow a slightly different interpretation of the verse presented by Viśvanātha Cakravartī. In his version, Rādhā asks Kṛṣṇa about His present residence, and He first takes the word *vāsa* to mean dress, answering, ‘Well, this is My dress, o You of captivated eyes’ (*mugdhekṣaṇe nanv idam*), as if She thought He was naked. The difference between the two versions is in the translation of the word *mugdhekṣaṇe*, which can be the vocative form of an appellation, ‘O You of captivated eyes’, or, it can be taken as part of Kṛṣṇa’s answer about His residence, meaning ‘I am residing in Your captivated eyes’. The rest of the verse is the same in all translations I have seen.

³¹⁹ Rūpa Gosvāmī only mentions Dvārakā as the place of Kṛṣṇa’s manifestation as *pūrṇa*, and Mathurā as the place of His manifestation as *pūrṇatara*. Jīva Gosvāmī adds Hastināpura, Kurukṣetra and Avanti, but does not specify exactly into which category they fall. It seems that the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa as either *pūrṇa*, *pūrṇatara* or *pūrṇatama* depends on the level of *prema* in His devotees who are concentrated in these geographic areas. Some places and pastimes may still stand out of the general pattern, stimulating manifestations of higher degrees of His personality, such as the meeting of Kṛṣṇa and the Vraja-*vāsīs* at Kurukṣetra after long years of separation. In that case, even though at Kurukṣetra, where at the time of the *Mahābhārata* battle Śrī Kṛṣṇa only manifested Himself as *pūrṇa*, He may reveal Himself as *pūrṇatara* or *pūrṇatama* in the association of more intimate devotees.

prowess, mercy and sweetness, while at other places the manifestations of these perfections are somewhat reduced, although never below His position of perfection.

Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes a list of faults possible in a person's character, from the *Viṣṇu-yāmala*, declaring that the Lord never has any of them. Jīva Gosvāmī, in the commentary, expertly finds many of these faults, describing the Lord's pastimes, exemplified in the scriptures, and therefore opines that in the matter of *prema* and relationships with His dear devotees, these so-called faults cannot be considered as such. An example of fickleness, *lola-tā*, is from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10. 8. 29):

Our dear friend Yaśodā, your son sometimes comes to our houses before the milking of the cows and releases the calves, and when the master of the house becomes angry, your son merely smiles. Sometimes He devises some process by which he steals palatable curd, butter and milk, which He then eats and drinks. When the monkeys assemble, He divides it with them, and when the monkeys have their bellies so full that they won't take more, He breaks the pots. Sometimes, if He gets no opportunity to steal butter or milk from a house, He will be angry at the householders, and for His revenge He will agitate the small children by pinching them. Then, when the children begin crying, Kṛṣṇa will go away.

What follows is a consideration of eight additional 'qualities of the heart', taken by Rūpa Gosvāmī from the dramatic theory³²⁰. These eight are applicable to dramatic heroes, but of course all of them are amply visible in the character of the Lord. Rūpa Gosvāmī thus gains a new opportunity to glorify the Lord, and minutely studies His perfections. He makes a comment that some of these qualities have already been included within the sixty-four, but this additional list emphasizes those qualities which are especially remarkable. They are called *śobhā* (glory), *vilāsa* (playfulness), *mādhurya* (sweetness), *māṅgalya* (auspiciousness), *sthairya* (steadiness), *tejas* (strength), *lalita* or *lālitya* (beauty) and *audārya* (generosity).

Up to this point, Rūpa Gosvāmī was treating the qualities as inherent in the Lord, and thus part of the *ālambana-vibhāva*. He now moves on to a consideration of the *uddīpana-vibhāvas*, the direct impetuses or excitants, related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He divides them into sixteen categories: 1) Kṛṣṇa's qualities like His age, beauty, form, softness, verbal and mental capabilities; 2) Kṛṣṇa's actions, 3) Kṛṣṇa's clothing, 4) Kṛṣṇa's accessories like hair style, garlands, *tilaka*, *tāmbūla* and play-lotus, 5) Kṛṣṇa's ornaments, 6) His attractive smile, 7) His fragrance, 8) His flutes, 9) His horn, 10) His anklets, 11) His conch, 12) His footprints, 13) holy places connected with Him, 14) the Tulasī plant, 15) His devotees, 16) festival days in His honor, like Janmāṣṭamī or Ekādaśī.

³²⁰ This set of eight qualities is mentioned in the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* of Viśvanātha Kavirāja, in the *Nāṭya-darpaṇa* of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, in the *Bhāva-prakāśa* of Śāradātanaya, and in the *Kāvyaṇuśāsana* of Vāgbhaṭṭa.

Rūpa Gosvāmī makes a detailed study of the Lord's flutes, which are divided into three kinds, the *veṇu*, *muralī* and *vaṁśikā*. The *veṇu* is nine inches long, the *muralī* is eighteen inches long and has only four holes, while the *vaṁśikā* has nine holes and is thirteen inches long. They can be made of jewels, gold or bamboo. By occupying their exalted minds with such minute details of the Lord's personal paraphernalia, the *Vaiṣṇava ācāryas* mock the exaggerated seriousness and severity of the worldly minded. One only prays that, following such exalted devoted sages, the lost people of the world could get an opportunity to dive into the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti.

*dhyānam balāt paramahaṁsa-kulasya bhindan
nindan sudhā-madhurimāṇam adhīra-dharmā
kandarpa-sāsana-dhurām muhur eṣa śaṁsan
vaṁśī-dhvanir jayati kaṁsa-nisūdanasya*

Victory be to the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute which has an unpredictable nature. It surpasses the sweetness of nectar, shatters the meditation of saintly ascetics, and at every moment insistently preaches the edicts of the God of love. (BRS, 2. 1. 364)

Let us now turn to a slightly more serious topic within the discussion of Kṛṣṇa's characteristics. Some *Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas* like to speak about the difference between Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa as that of the quality of Their respective characters. Śrī Rāma is glorified as the epitome of *dharma*, the *maryādā-puruṣottama*, while the glory of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *līlā-puruṣottama*, is sometimes stained by the imperfect understanding of His *līlā* and His virtues, especially in relation to the *gopīs* of Vraja.

8. 1. 2. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs

The supreme, most intimate pastimes of the Lord in Vraja have always been a hard nut to crack for all who cannot appreciate these ultimate levels of *prema* exchanged between the Lord and His beloved *gopīs*. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* documents even the apparent confusion of one of the greatest relishers of topics about the Lord, the devoted descendant of the Pāṇḍava dynasty, Mahārāja Parīkṣit³²¹. After hearing

³²¹ The commentators conclude that this could not have been his own doubt, but was expressed on behalf of the other listeners. His question comes after a description of the Lord's enjoyment with the *gopīs* in the *rāsa* dance, which Śukadeva Gosvāmī completes with a statement that the Lord took advantage of the nights filled with moonlight in the *śarat* season, to fulfill the desires of His devoted servants, although He Himself is *satya-kāma*, 'whose all desires are always fulfilled', and *ātmany-avaruddha-saurata*, 'suppressing His amorous feelings within Himself [remaining unaffected externally]'. (Bhāg. 10. 33. 25)

about the famous pastime of the *rāsa* dance, he submits his doubt to Śukadeva Gosvāmī:

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca
saṁsthāpanāya dharmasya praśamāyetaṣya ca
avatīrṇo hi bhagavān aṁśena jagad-īśvaraḥ
sa katham dharma-setūnām vaktā kartābhirakṣitā
pratīpam ācarad brahman para-dārābhimarśanam
āpta-kāmo yadu-patiḥ kṛtavān vai jugupsitam
kim-abhiprāya etan naḥ saṁśayaṁ chindhi su-vrata

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said: O *brāhmaṇa*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the universe, has descended to this earth along with His plenary portion [Balarāma] to destroy irreligion and reestablish religious principles.

Indeed, He is the original speaker, follower and guardian of moral laws. How, then, could He have violated them by touching other men's wives?

O faithful upholder of vows, please destroy our doubt by explaining to us what purpose the self-satisfied Lord of the Yadus had in mind when He behaved so contemptibly (*kṛtavān vai jugupsitam*).

śrī-śuka uvāca
dharma-vyatikramo dṛṣṭa īśvarāṇām ca sāhasam
tejīyasām na doṣāya vahnēḥ sarva-bhujo yathā
naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty ācaran maudhyād yathārudro 'bdhi-jam viṣam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The status of powerful controllers (*īśvaras*) is not harmed by any apparently audacious transgression of morality we may see in them, for they are just like fire, which devours everything fed into it and remains unpolluted.

One who is not a great controller should never imitate the behavior of ruling personalities, even mentally. If out of foolishness an ordinary person does imitate such behavior, he will simply destroy himself, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison. (Bhāg. 10. 33. 26-30)

Śukadeva Gosvāmī launches an impressive campaign in favor of the Supreme Lord, stating that He is the supreme law-maker, but nevertheless above those laws Himself. The intelligent follow His laws, but do not imitate those of His actions which are obviously expressions of His supreme independent position. The Lord descends to establish *dharma*, but is also supremely independent in His attempts to reciprocate with loving devotees. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī concludes with a firm statement that the Lord is the Supreme Soul of all the *gopīs* and their husbands as well, and that there is no impropriety in the Lord's connection with His own separated energies, embodiments of His internal *hlādinī-śakti*. His purpose in descending to this world is to perform pastimes full of love with His separated energies, so that other souls of the world may become attracted to His loving, reciprocal nature and become His devotees.

Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Nāṭaka-candrika* also makes sure that the extraordinary position of the Lord is kept intact, and that no fault is attached to His relation with the *gopīs*. The matter comes up because many classical poetic theorists – quite naturally and justifiedly – consider a relationship between the *upapati* (lover) and the *parakīyā*- or *parodhā-nāyikā* (lady married to another) to be indecent and inappropriate in the context of drama or poetry.

The *Vaiṣṇava-dharma* has always been famous for its supreme purity and the perfect *sadācāra* of its practitioners. Of course, in ordinary life paramourship is most degraded and condemnable, but there is one extraordinary exception which needs to be acknowledged. That is the spiritual relationship of the *gopīs* with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who all descend to this world in a replica of Goloka, with its perfections of devotional relationships. In Goloka and in Gokula, the *gopīs* consider themselves married to others and are attracted to the Lord as their paramour, but the impropriety in their relationship exists only in the eyes of the worldly minded. Mundane morality cannot be stretched out of its jurisdiction to govern spiritual relationships which are based on the supreme perfections of selflessness and devotion. And when the theme of Kṛṣṇa-līlā appears in poetry and drama, we should make sure that it is not marred and dethroned from its supreme position by poets and poetic theorists who obviously do not understand its spiritual essence. One of such poetic theorists is Viśvanātha Kavirāja, and Rūpa Gosvāmī criticizes his *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* in the beginning of the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, calling the work antagonistic to Bharata Muni and not useful to his own purposes³²². *Kārikā* 10 of the *Nāṭaka-candrikā* discusses the issue:

yat parodhopapatyoś ca gauṇatvaṁ kathitaṁ budhaiḥ
tat tu kṛṣṇaś ca gopīś ca vineti pratipadyatām
tathā cuktam rasa-vilāse (sudeva-kṛte) –
neṣṭā yad aṅgini rase kavibhiḥ parodhās tad gokulāmbuja-dṛśāṅkulam antareṇa
āśamsayā rasa-vidher avatāritānām kaṁsāriṇā rasika-maṇḍala-śekhareṇa

It has been said by the wise that the relationship of the *parodhā-nāyikā* and the *upapati* is relegated to a secondary position (or, can only be represented in secondary *rasas* within the play, not in the main, *śṛṅgāra*) [because of its impropriety]. But that should not be considered as applicable to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*.

As is stated by Sudeva in his *Rasa-vilāsa*: If the poets are not inclined towards the concept of *parodhā-nāyikā* in the main *rasa*, that excludes the consideration of the lotus-eyed ladies of Gokula. It should be borne in mind that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of Kāṁsa, and the highest ideal of all *rasikas*, has incarnated specifically to taste these [*aprākṛta*] *rasas*. (*Nāṭaka-candrikā*, *kārikā* 10)

³²² Viśvanātha Kavirāja's work has been discussed in Chapter 3. The contentious issue is probably exactly the fact that Viśvanātha Kavirāja calls *parakīya* relationships a mere *rasābhāsa*. The introductory verses to *Nāṭaka-candrikā* are as follows: *vikṣya bharata-muni-śāstraṁ rasa-pūrvva-sudhākaraṇī ca ramaṇīyam / lakṣaṇam ati-saṁkṣepād vilikhyate nāṭakasyedam // nāṭiva saṅgatatvād bharata-muner virodhāc ca / sāhitya-darpaṇīyā na gṛhītā prakriyā prāyaḥ* (*Nāṭaka-candrikā*, *kārikā* 1,2)

The same points are reiterated in the beginning of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which, being an exclusive compendium on the theme of *mādhurya-rasa*, has to be protected diligently from mundane misunderstandings. Its first chapter deals with Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the *aprākṛta-nāyaka* of *mādhurya-rasa*, and the following *kārikā* makes Him immune to mundane considerations of impropriety:

*laghutvam atra yat proktaṁ tat tu prākṛta-nāyake
na kṛṣṇe rasa-niryāsa- svādārtham avatāriṇi*

Whatever fault of impropriety has been pointed out [in other *rasa-śāstras*] in regard to love of paramours applies to ordinary worldly lovers and not to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for the exact purpose of His incarnation was to taste the liquid nectar of *rasa*. (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 1. 19)³²³

Both of the main commentators of the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Jīva Gosvāmī in his *Locana-rocanī-ṭīkā* and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in his *Ānanda-candrikā-ṭīkā*, devote pages and pages to this important issue. Parts of the commentaries will be presented below. Jīva Gosvāmī's points are as follows:

*ity anarvācīna niruktau 'uttama-prakṛti-prāyaḥ' ityukte kajjalam śuci-paryāye rase
'sminn adharma-mayam aupapatyam bhaṅgatvāya nocitaḥ. 'jāraḥ pāpa-patiḥ samau' iti
trikāṇḍaśeṣādi-darśanena nāmāpi tasya nindā-garbham eva labhyate. nāṭyālankāra
śāstrayos tu tasya nyak-kāraś ca śrūyate. yaduktaṁ tat tan-mataṁ saṁgrhya sāhitya-
darpaṇe³²⁴. yat tu kutrāpy aupapatya-varṇanam dṛśyate, tat khalu –*

*neṣṭā yad aṅgini rase kavibhiḥ paroḍhās tad gokulāmbujadṛśān kulaṁ antareṇa
āśamsayā rasa-vidher avatāritāṇām kamsāriṇā rasika-maṇḍala-śekhareṇa*

Our opponents declare *aupapatya* as unsuitable to the definition of the *uttama-prakṛti* (the pure character of the hero) and they liken it to a black spot on the pure *rasa*. They say, since it is against *dharma*, any connection with the opposite gender without wedlock is not considered proper. There are many statements in the *karma-kāṇḍa* about old sinful husbands, which are an expression of critique. The texts on *nāṭya* and *alankāra* also denounce it. Whatever is the general opinion of the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* on the topic of *anaucitya* is also accepted by us. However, sometimes, there is a description of *aupapatya*.

"If the poets are not inclined towards the concept of *paroḍhā-nāyikā* in the main *rasa*, that excludes the consideration of the lotus-eyed ladies of Gokula. It should be borne

³²³ I use the edition of the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* prepared by M. M. Pandit Durga Prasad and V. L. Shastri Panashikar, reprinted by Chowkhamba in 1985, originally published in 1932 as *Kāvya-mālā* No. 95, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay. The edition includes commentaries by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī.

³²⁴ *upānāyaka-saṁsthāyām muni-guru-patnī-gatāyām ca / bahu-nāyaka-viśayehā ratau ca tathānubhava
niṣṭhāyām / śṛṅgāre naucityam. (Sāhitya-darpaṇa)*

in mind that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of Kāmsa, and the highest ideal of all *rasikas*, has incarnated specifically to taste these [*aprākṛta*] *rasas*.” (*Rasa-vilāsa* by Sudeva, quoted in *Nāṭaka-candrikā* after *kārikā* 11)

*darśayīṣyamāṇa vṛddha-mata-prāmāṇyenāṅgini rase tu na syāt. kim tv aṅge rase
sopahāsam eveti gamyate tat-pakṣam puṣṇatā svayaṁ śrī-kṛṣṇena ca –*

*asvargyam ayaśasyaṁ ca phalgu kṛcchraṁ bhayāvaham
jugupsitaṁ ca sarvatra hy aupapatyaṁ kula-striyaḥ*

śrī-parīkṣitenāpītham evākṣiptam –

*āpta-kāmo yadu-patiḥ kṛtavān vai jugupsitam
kim-abhiprāya etan naḥ saṁśayaṁ chindhi su-vrata*

It is observed that by the consensus of the opinions of the elders, the *aupapatya* is not given a place in the *aṅgī-rasa* (i.e. *śṛṅgāra*). It is acceptable in the *aṅga-rasa* (secondary *rasa*), but only as a means of enticing humor. Kṛṣṇa also supports that opinion:

“For a woman from a respectable family, petty adulterous affairs are always condemned. They bar her from heaven, ruin her reputation and bring her difficulty and fear.” (Bhāg. 10. 29. 26)

Parīkṣit Mahārāja also objected to it:

“O faithful upholder of vows, please destroy our doubt by explaining to us what purpose the self-satisfied Lord of the Yadus had in mind when He behaved so contemptibly.” (Bhāg. 10. 33. 28)

*tad evam atra ca laghutvaṁ kṣudratvaṁ jugupsitatvaṁ iti yāvad yākhyeyam, ato muninā
bharatenāpi ratnāvalī-nāṭikāvad yayāti-caritavac ca dāmpatyaṁ eva sapatnādikṛta
vāryamāṇatvādinā dāmpatye ratiḥ praśastā bhavātīty eva mataṁ nopapatya-ratiḥ praśastā
syād iti. katham tarhi tad-vākyenaupapatya-ratiḥ praśasyate.*

Here its low nature and its abominability are declared, and further, Bharata Muni and other writers (in the *Ratnāvalī-nāṭikā*, *Yayāti-carita* etc.) praise the relationships purified through marriage and thus indirectly condemn relationships without wedlock. How is it, then, that *aupapatya-rati* is sometimes glorified by Bharata Muni³²⁵.

*atra samādhānam – tat tu prākṛta-nāyaka ityādinā prākṛta-nāyaka iti kṛṣṇāt aparā-
nāyaka ity arthaḥ. kṛṣṇe tv alaghutve hetuḥ – rasa-niryāseti. rasa-niryāso rasa-sāraḥ.
madhura-rasa-viśeṣa ity arthaḥ. etad uktaṁ bhavati – atrāvatāra-samaya evaupapatya-
ritiḥ pratyāyitā, tad etad darśake prācām mate ‘pi ‘āśaṁsayā rasa-vidher avatāritānām’ iti
tasyai tāsām api tad-artham eva tāsām avatāra iti nirdekṣyate.*

³²⁵ The *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* introduces a quote of Bharata Muni about the supreme mellow of *aupapatya*, UN 1. 17. I was not able to locate the verse in the existing versions of the *Nāṭya-sāstra*.

We have to understand this carefully: *tat tu prākṛta-nāyake* means that it is abominable for any ordinary hero who is not Kṛṣṇa Himself. Kṛṣṇa is not under suspicion here, because of the words *rasa-niryāsa*. That means the essence of *rasa*. Specifically it means Śrī Kṛṣṇa's loving exchanges with His devotees in *mādhurya-rasa*. It is said – at the time of the Lord's appearance, he will avail Himself of the *aupapatya-rīti*, and it is also the opinion of elders that His appearance is precisely for the purpose of relating to these ladies. Just as it is said in the verse,

*neṣṭā yad aṅgini rase kavibhiḥ paroḍhās tad gokulāmbujadṛśān kulam antareṇa
āśaṁsayā rasa-vidher avatāritāṇām kaṁsāriṇā rasika-maṇḍala-śekhareṇa*

“If the poets are not inclined towards the concept of *paroḍhā-nāyikā* in the main *rasa*, that excludes the consideration of the lotus-eyed ladies of Gokula. It should be borne in mind that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of Kaṁsa, and the highest ideal of all *rasikas*, has incarnated specifically to taste these [*aprākṛta*] *rasas*.” (*Rasa-vilāsa* by Sudeva, quoted in *Nāṭaka-candrikā* after *kārikā* 11)

*tasya tāsām ca tadarthatā śrī-brahmaṇā cuktā - 'tat-priyārtham sambhavantu sura-
striyaḥ'*³²⁶ *iti. atra bhārāvatāraṇam devādīnām icchayā tad idam tu aupapatyam tu tasya
svecchayeti hi gamyate. madhura-nāmnō rasasya niryāsa-svādo 'pi darsītaḥ śrī-śukena -*

Lord Brahmā also spoke of this – the wives of the demigods should appear along with the Lord's incarnation, for His pleasure. At the time of His appearance, it is understood that He uplifts the burden of the world because the demigods wish Him to do so, and He accepts *aupapatya* because He Himself wishes to do so. Śrī Śuka also understands the Lord's pastime of tasting *mādhurya-rasa*. He therefore says,

*bhagavān api tā rātriḥ śāradoṭphulla-mallikāḥ
vikṣya rantum manas cakre yoga-māyām upāśritam*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, full in all opulences, yet upon seeing those autumn nights scented with blossoming jasmine flowers, He turned His mind toward loving affairs. To fulfill His purposes He employed His internal potency.” (Bhāg. 10. 29. 1)

*iti viklavitaṁ tāsām śrutvā yogeśvareśvaraḥ
prahasya sa-dayam goṇīr ātmārāmo 'py arīramat*

“Smiling upon hearing these despondent words from the *goṇīs*, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of mystic yoga, mercifully enjoyed with them, although He is self-satisfied.” (Bhāg. 10. 29. 42)

*evam śaśāṅkāṁsu-virājitā niśāḥ sa satya-kāmo 'nuratābalā-gaṇaḥ
siṣeva ātmany avaruddha-saurataḥ sarvāḥ śarat-kāvya-kathā-rasāśrayāḥ*

³²⁶ Bhāg. 10. 1. 23.

“Although the *gopīs* were firmly attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose desires are always fulfilled, the Lord was not internally affected by any mundane desire. Still, to perform His pastimes the Lord took advantage of all those moonlit autumn nights, which inspire poetic descriptions of transcendental *rasas*.” (Bhāg. 10. 33. 25)

Jīva Gosvāmī continues with the consideration of the meaning of the word *sura-striyaḥ*: the expression can cover the meaning of the expansions of Lakṣmī Devī or other demigoddesses, and in the ultimate sense, it refers to the *gopīs*. Referring to verses from the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (*lakṣmī-sahasra-śata*, and *śriyaḥ kāntāḥ*) where the words Lakṣmī and Śrī refer to the *gopīs* in Goloka, he concludes that the term *sura-striyaḥ* is generic, and in a specific case refers to the *gopīs* who are the most excellent. It is like calling the Pāṇḍavas by their broad appellation Kurus, but when we want to make it specific, we say, ‘The Pāṇḍavas have defeated the Kurus.’ In the same way, the superexcellence of the *gopīs*, distinguishing them from other ladies, has been stated by Uddhava in the famous verse:

*nāyaṁ śriyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasāda svar-yoṣitām nalina-gandha-rucām kuto 'nyāḥ
rāsotsave 'sya bhuja-daṇḍa-grhīta-kaṇṭha- labdhāśīśām ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām*

“When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the *gopīs* in the *rāsa-līlā*, the *gopīs* were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world. Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful according to material estimation?” (Bhāg. 10. 47. 60)

Jīva Gosvāmī concludes that on the basis of this statement of Uddhava, the statements in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* about the eternal union of the Lord and His energies, and the supreme position of His consorts in Goloka, it follows that the *parakīya* situation of the *gopīs* is more or less simply an illusion in their *prakṛṣṭa-līlā*. For example, in his commentary to the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5. 37), Jīva Gosvāmī explains the expression *nija-rūpatayā kalābhīḥ* as meaning that the *gopīs* are eternally related to Him as His own (*nija*) and cannot, therefore, ever be considered *parakīyā* (of another). He also cites the *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka* of Rūpa Gosvāmī, where the *gopīs* eventually become married to the Lord even in the *prakṛṣṭa-līlā*. The later commentators guess that Jīva Gosvāmī's position on this issue was perhaps pragmatic, to free the *sampradāya* of the stigma of improper relations between their worshipable deities.

Indeed, a century after the times of the Gosvāmīs, a severe criticism surfaced about the philosophical conclusions of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* and an able disciple of Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, was instrumental in dispersing the

clouds of doubt. Let us first turn to the commentary of Viśvanātha Cakravartī to the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, and then discuss the historical developments.

*laghutvam atra yat proktam tat tu prākṛta-nāyake
na kṛṣṇe rasa-niryāsa- svādārtham avatāriṇi*

laghutvam iti. atropapatau yal laghutvam uktam pūrvācāryais tat prākṛta-nāyaka eva tatraivaupapatyasya vaidharmyāt, tasya ca dūra-dṛṣṭa-janakatvāt, tasya ca naraka-pātānidānatvāt, paryavasāne duḥkha-mātropādānatvena tasya laghutvam. tathā tat-tac-ceṣṭitasya kāvya-nāṭya-gatatvena upādeyatayā svādane 'yad adharmā-kṛtaḥ sthānam sūcakasyāpi tad bhavet' iti nyāyāc carvaṇa-daśāyām sabhyānām api tād-rūpyāpatteḥ ca vidharma-sparśāt.

Whatever has been stated about the impropriety of paramour love by the previous ācāryas holds true only for ordinary heroes, since in this world such a relationship is against *dharma*, since it causes the birth of despicable progeny, since it is a cause of falldown into hell, and since its result is simply misery. Therefore activities to be represented in poetry and drama are selected by the logic of the saying, 'Whatever *adharmic* deed is performed taints also the person who was the inspiration for it.' It is understood that it is touched by *adharma* and almost equal to the actual transgression if decent people are made to ponder about improper actions.

na tu kṛṣṇe dharmādharmā-niyantr-cūdāmaṇindre kimartham noktam. rasa-niryāsa-svādārtham teṣāṃ sabhyatayā tad-viśayaka eva sva-kartṛko yo rasa-niryāsasvādas tad artham. yadi kṛṣṇe 'pi tair laghutvam uktam syāt tarhi teṣāṃ rasa-niryāsasvādo nirviśaya syād iti bhāvaḥ. kṛṣṇe kīdṛṣe. avatāriṇi avatāra-mātrasyaiva dharmādharmā-niyamatvam nāstīti śruti-smṛti-prasiddham, kim uta sarvāvatāra-mūla-bhūtasya tasya iti bhāvaḥ.

But why is the same impropriety not declared also concerning Kṛṣṇa, the highest crest jewel of all regulators of *dharma* and *adharma*? The point is that enjoyment in the tasting of *rasa* between the Lord, the creator, and His own created parts, who become *viśayas* of enjoyment, is not tainted by indecency. And if the fault of impropriety is insisted on, then that tasting of *rasa* would be without its object (*nirviśaya*). And who is Kṛṣṇa? He is the *avatāri*, the source of all incarnations, and even all *avatāras* are declared by the *śrutis* and *smṛtis* to be above the regulations of *dharma* and *adharma*. What then to speak of Him who is the root of all incarnations. This is the idea.

(...) *tataś ca tayor eva nāyakottamatve prasajyamāne 'pi yal laghutvam uktam tatra kāraṇam adharmasya sparśa eva. sa tu śrī kṛṣṇe dharmādharmādi-samasta-vastu-sṛṣṭi-sthiti-saṃhāra-kāraka-bhrū-vijṛmbha-mātrasyādi-puruṣasyāmsini svayam bhagavati śrī-lilā-puruṣottame nara-vapuṣi tathaiva tadīya-mahā-śakti-samudāya-parama-mukhyatamāyām hlādinī-śaktau śrī-gopikā-rūpāyām ca naiva sambhavet, tadā tadīya-tat-tac-caritāsvādakānām api 'vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhiḥ' iti, 'tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavaḥ' iti, 'tad eva satyam tad uhaiva maṅgalam' ityādibhiḥ, sarvottama-mahā-phala-prāpti-śravaṇāc ca pratyuta tathaiva nāyakottamatvam eva prasañjitam iti.*

Moreover, if the fault of impropriety (of *aupapatya*) has been considered inadmissible for the *uttama-prakṛti-nāyaka*, then the cause for such a consideration is also [the fear of the] touch of *adharma* in it. But that is not possible in the case of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Puruṣa, by whom all things, beginning with *dharma* and *adharma*, are created, maintained and annihilated just by a slight move of His eyebrows; the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the *Līlā-puruṣottama*, appearing in a human form; and in the case of His greatest *śakti*, *hlādinī*, which takes on the form of the many *gopīs*. Otherwise, how could the highest result be reserved for those who enjoy hearing about His pastimes, as is mentioned in verses like:

*vikṛīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

Anyone who faithfully hears or describes the Lord's playful affairs with the young *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana will attain the Lord's pure devotional service. Thus he will quickly become sober and conquer lust, the disease of the heart. (Bhāg. 10. 33. 39)

*tad-vāg-visargo-janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ṅkitāni yat
śṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhaṇaḥ*

On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest. (Bhāg. 1. 5. 11)

*mṛṣā giras tā hy asatīr asat-kathā
na kathyate yad bhagavān adhokṣajaḥ
tad eva satyaṁ tad u haiva maṅgalaṁ
tad eva puṇyaṁ bhagavad-guṇodayam*

Words that do not describe the transcendental Personality of Godhead but instead deal with temporary matters are simply false and useless. Only those words that manifest the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord are actually truthful, auspicious and pious. (Bhāg. 12. 12. 49)

To this is connected also the proof of Kṛṣṇa's character as an *uttama-prakṛti-nāyaka*.

ata evoktaṁ grantha-kṛdbhir eva nāṭaka-candrikāyām —

yat paroḍhopapātyas tu gaṇatvaṁ kathitaṁ budhaiḥ
tat tu kṛṣṇe ca gopīs ca vineti pratipadyatām

And it is also described in the author's *Nāṭaka-candrikā*: Whatever defect is described in connection to the *paroḍhā-nāyikā* and the *upapāti* is to be understood as not applicable to Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. (*Nāṭaka-candrikā*, verse 10)

*alaṅkāra-kaustubha-kṛdbhir api –
aprākṛte tu paroḍha-ramaṇī-ratir eva sarvottamatayā bhūyaś śrūyate na tasyām
anaucitya-pravartitatvaṁ alaṅkāra-siddher bhūṣaṇam eva na tu dūṣaṇam iti nyāyāt
tarka-gocaratvāc ca iti.*

The author of the *Alaṅkāra-kaustubha* (Kavi Karṇapūra) also writes: In a spiritual relationship, the love of a lady towards her lover is considered by far the highest and there is no question of impropriety about it. It is an ornament of the transcendental perfection rather than a sin. It should be understood by applying this sensible logic.

In this way, either by pronouncing the *gopīs* as eternally the manifestations of the Lord's internal potency, and thus free from the taint of paramourship in relation to Him, or by insisting that their paramourship with the Lord is of a spiritual, untainted variety, we come to the same conclusion of the undeniable supreme perfection of the *gopīs* of Vraja. Some misunderstanding exists about these apparently contrasting positions of the two major commentators on this point, but later *ācāryas* call the difference a mere *vicāra-vaiśiṣṭya*, a difference in the perspective. Jīva Gosvāmī discusses the issue from the point of *tattva*, while Viśvanātha Cakravartī focuses on the angle of tasting the *rasa*. Ultimately, whether the *parakīya-bhāva* is real or illusory, its effect is what is important: it helps to create extreme levels of hankering and bond between the transcendental lovers.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī points out that even if Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are married later in Their *līlā* outside Vṛndāvana, at least in Vṛndāvana They are not married, and so should be meditated upon in Their transcendental paramour relationship. Those who worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa within the *vidhi-mārga*, will attain the Mahā-Vaikuṇṭha sphere within Goloka where *svakīya* and *parakīya* distinctions remain undistinguished. Their fascination is with the *aiśvarya* aspect of the Divine couple. Those who prefer to be impressed with Their *mādhurya* aspect, but cannot give up the *vidhi-mārga*, will find their constitutional position among the Queens in Dvārakā, understanding that Satyabhāmā and Rādhārāṇī are the same personality (as described in the *Lalita-mādhava*). And those who are overwhelmed by the *mādhurya* aspect to such a degree that their worship is purely within *rāga-mārga*, will attain the position of attendants of the Divine couple in Goloka.

A word remains to be said about the history of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya*, about two hundred years after the times of Lord Caitanya and the Gosvāmīs. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Aurangzeb's resolution to destroy Hindu temples and

deities has alarmed Vṛndāvana, and many of the Gosvāmī Deities have been moved to Rajasthan for safety. In 1707, Rūpa Gosvāmī's Govindadeva Deity and the Deity of Rādhārāṇī worshipped along with Him have been moved to Jaipur. The young king of Amber at that time was Mahārāja Jai Singh, of a *Vaiṣṇava* persuasion. A stronghold of *Rāmānandī* monks in the vicinity, in the valley of Galta, became afraid about their own sphere of influence after the arrival of Govindadeva. They issued a challenge to the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* about the veracity of their lineage, and their daring practice of worshipping Śrī Rādhā alongside Śrī Kṛṣṇa, although They were not married. Their persistence in this issue gives us a clue as to why Jīva Gosvāmī was eager to establish the ultimate position of the untainted *svakīya* relationship.

Mahārāja Jai Singh, concerned, quickly sent messengers to Vṛndāvana, and asked for a competent scholar who could defeat the challenges. At that time, Viśvanātha Cakravartī was the leader of the *Gauḍīya* community in Vṛndāvana, but due to his old age he could not answer the challenge himself. He sent to Jaipur a young scholar of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism*, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who ably defeated the opposing arguments, so that the united worship of Rādhā-Govinda could continue without interruption. To appease the opponents, he quickly produced a *Gauḍīya* commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, and, acknowledging that such a major work in so short a time was indeed a miracle of the Lord, called it the *Govinda-bhāṣya*. It is the only commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* in the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya*, since the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* essentially accept the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* itself as the ripe commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, produced by Vyāsadeva himself. Jai Singh presided over the debate, and upon seeing the silenced *Rāmānandīs*, concluded that the *Gauḍīyas* are an authentic *Vaiṣṇava sampradāya*.

In 1735, the king built a temple for Rādhā-Govinda within the Jaipur palace compound, where They remain till today. Mahārāja Jai Singh later installed Govindadeva as the actual king of Jaipur and himself accepted the position of a mere minister. From that time his royal seal read, *śrī-govindadeva-caraṇa savāi-jaya-simha-śaraṇa*, "Lord Govindadeva's lotus feet are the refuge of Savāi Jai Singh."³²⁷

8. 1. 3. *The Four Types of Heroes*

Having established the supreme spiritual ideal of heroes and heroines in Goloka, Śrī Hari and His consorts, of whom mundane heroes and heroines are only vague shadows, we move to a delineation of the four kinds of heroes of the dramatic theory, exemplified by the Lord in various circumstances. In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and briefly in the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, the four standard

³²⁷ Compiled with the help of an article by Dayānanda Dāsa and Nandarāṇī Dāsī, "Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa – A Gauḍīya Vedāntist", *Back to Godhead Magazine*, Volume 25, Issue No. 1-2, 1991.

types of dramatic heroes are described. All classical works of dramaturgy accept this division of heroes, found in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. All four are prefixed with the word *dhīra*, indicating that whatever his specific nature, the hero always remains steady and does not waver while following the course of his fate. According to the needs of dramatic plots, the four types of characters are described as:

- 1) *dhīroddhata* (vehement in nature, for example the demigods)
- 2) *dhīralalita* (lighthearted, for example kings)
- 3) *dhīra-praśānta* (calm and self-controlled, for example *brāhmaṇas* or merchants)
- 4) *dhīrodātta* (elevated, for example, commanders and ministers of the king)³²⁸

The *dhīra-lalita* variety is the youthful carefree lover, such as king Udayana in the *Ratnāvalī-nāṭikā* of Śrī Harṣa and in the *Svapna-vāsavadatta* of Bhāsa. The *dhīra-śānta* variety is exemplified within the *prakaraṇa* called *Mṛcchakaṭika*, the work of Śūdraka, in the character of a peaceful, subdued *brāhmaṇa* Cārudatta. Another example is the hero of the drama *Mālatī-mādhava* by Bhavabhūti. Rāmacandra or Yudhiṣṭhira would be examples of a *dhīrodātta* hero, high-souled and principled, while examples of energetic *dhīroddhata* heroes are difficult to find in extant *nāṭakas*, and the example of a sub-hero on the verge of a *prati-nāyaka*, such as Paraśurāma in the drama on the theme of *Rāmāyaṇa*, is usually given. Bhīma could be an example of a *dhīroddhata* hero, but it seems that this particular variety is somewhat unpopular due to the slightly impetuous nature of such a hero. Usually the *dhīroddhata* nature is reserved for full-fledged *prati-nāyakas* (enemies of the heroes), such as Rāvaṇa in the case of Rāma, and Duryodhana in the case of Yudhiṣṭhira.

For each of the four varieties, dramatic compendiums prescribe lists of his characteristic qualities. The different theorists do not differ very substantially on these qualities, therefore we might as well remain content with the qualities listed by Rūpa Gosvāmī. One could object to his idea of postulating Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the example of all four varieties, when obviously they represent dissimilar, even contradictory behavior. Rūpa Gosvāmī insists that the Lord is the reservoir of unlimited qualities, and He manifests different sets of them more prominently in different pastimes.

The *dhīrodātta* hero (possessing an elevated nature) is grave (*gambhīra*), modest (*vinayī*), tolerant (*kṣāntā*), merciful (*karuṇa*), determined in vows (*sudṛḍha-vrata*), not boastful (*akatthana*), able to conceal his pride (*gūḍha-garva*), and has an imposing presence (*su-sattva-bhṛt*). An example of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the state of such a hero is the following praise by Indra, after his blunder of inundating Vṛndāvana:

Your smile steals the pride of those who think they are brave. You are eager to deliver those in suffering conditions. You are true to Your promises. You are firm in holding up the high mountain [Govardhana]. You have treated me kindly although I was

³²⁸ *Nāṭya-śāstra*, chapter 34, in some editions 24. *Kārikās* 17-19.

offensive. You are brought under control by verses of praise. Seeing You with such an inscrutable character, my words and intelligence have both become inactive. (BRS, 2. 227)

The *dhīra-lalita* variety is related to Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* in Vṛndāvana, examples of it being all too numerous. Rūpa Gosvāmī lists the qualities of such a hero as clever (*vidagdha*), endowed with fresh youth (*nava-tāruṇya*), skilful at joking (*parihāsa-viśārada*) and free of worries (*niścinta*). He is controlled by the love of His devotees, especially the ladies of Vraja. Jīva Gosvāmī cites the famous example of His submission to the love of Rādhā:

*anayārādhito nūnaṁ bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayad rahaḥ*

The *gopīs* conclude: Certainly this particular *gopī* [Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī] has perfectly worshipped the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, Govinda, since He was so pleased with Her that He abandoned the rest of us and brought her to a secluded place. (Bhāg. 10. 30. 28)

The *dhīra-śānta* hero is calm (*śama-prakṛtika*), able to tolerate difficulties (*kleśa-sahana*), discriminating (*vivecaka*) and possesses virtues like modesty and so on. Jīva Gosvāmī offers an example of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the association of the Pāṇḍavas:

*sārathya-pāraśada-sevana-sakhya-dautya-
vīraśānānugamana-stavana-praṇāmān
snigdheṣu pāṇḍuṣu jagat-praṇatīm ca viṣṇor
bhaktiṁ karoti nṛ-patiś caraṇāravinde*

Mahārāja Parikṣit heard that out of His causeless mercy Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu who is universally obeyed, rendered all kinds of service to the affectionate sons of Pāṇḍu by accepting posts ranging from chariot driver to president to messenger, friend, night watchman, and so on, according to the will of the Pāṇḍavas, obeying them like a servant and offering obeisances like one younger in years. When he heard this, Mahārāja Parikṣit became overwhelmed with devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord. (Bhāg. 1. 16. 16)

The *dhīroddhata* hero is envious (*mātsaryavān*), proud (*ahaṅkāri*), deceitful (*māyāvī*), prone to anger (*roṣaṇa*), fickle (*cala*) and boastful (*vikatthana*). Rūpa Gosvāmī presents an example of the Lord's boastful words as he attacks Kālayavana, but then adds another example from Vraja, more conducive to feelings of *bhakti*:

*ambho-bhāra-bhara-praṇamra-jalada-bhrāntiṁ vitanvann asau
ghoraḍambara-ḍambaraḥ suvikuṭām utkṣipyā hāstārgalām
durvāraḥ para-vāraṇaḥ svayam ahaṁ labdho 'smi kṛṣṇaḥ puro*

re śrīdāma-kuraṅga saṅgara-bhuvo bhaṅgaṁ tvam aṅgikuru

O Śrīdāmā! You poor little deer! You should flee from this battlefield. I who stand before you am Kṛṣṇa in the form of a huge invincible elephant ready to destroy enemies. I make a terrifying roar like a mighty cloud bent low with a heavy burden of water, and I lift My elephant trunk-like arm which is as huge as massive bolts locking the gate. (BRS, 2. 1. 240)

8. 1. 4. *Rādhikā Para-devatā*

Alongside Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the supreme ideal of a *nāyaka*, eternally stands Śrī Rādhā, the embodiment of all Lakṣmīs. She is the supreme object of affection of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as well as of the innumerable *gopīs*, the residents of Goloka.

devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā
sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva- kāntiḥ sammohinī parā

The transcendental goddess Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the direct counterpart of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She is the central figure for all the goddesses of fortune. She possesses all the attractiveness to attract the all-attractive Personality of Godhead. She is the primeval internal potency of the Lord. (*Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra*, quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi, 4. 83)

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Rūpa Gosvāmī devotes a chapter to Her, calling Her the supreme personification of the *hlādinī-śakti* of the Lord³²⁹. He cites quotes from the *Purāṇas* about the glories of Rādhārāṇī³³⁰. He scrutinizingly describes Her perfect qualities and ornaments. As the subject is extremely esoteric, it cannot be treated in any detail here. Her most outstanding characteristic is that She can overpower even the Supreme independent Lord due to the intensity of Her love. As an example of Her incomparable beauty, Rūpa Gosvāmī submits a verse from his drama *Vidagdha-mādhava*, where Paurṇamāsī says:

balād akṣṇor lakṣmīḥ kavalayati navyaṁ kuvalayaṁ
mukhollāsaḥ phullaṁ kamala-vanam ullaṅghayati ca
daśaṁ kaṣṭhāṁ aṣṭāpadam api nayaty āṅgika-rucir
vicitraṁ rādhāyāḥ kimapi kila rūpaṁ vilasati

³²⁹ mahā-bhāva-svarūpeyaṁ guṇair ati-varīyaśi (...) hlādinī yā mahā-śaktiḥ sarva-śakti-varīyaśi (...) suṣṭhu kāntā-svarūpeyaṁ sarvadā vārṣabhānavī (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 4. 3, 5, 7)

³³⁰ A quote of Nārada from the *Padma Purāṇa*: yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos tasyāḥ kuṇḍaṁ priyaṁ tathā / sarva-gopīṣu saivaikā viṣṇor atyanta-vallabhā. (Quoted in UN, 4. 5)

The beauty of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's eyes forcibly devours the beauty of newly grown blue lotus flowers, and the beauty of Her face surpasses that of an entire forest of fully blossomed pink lotuses. Her bodily luster seems to place even gold in a painful situation. Thus the wonderful, unprecedented beauty of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is awakening in Vṛndāvana. (*Vidagdha-mādhava*, 1. 32, quoted in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 4. 20)

Availing himself of the categories enumerated within the dramatic theory, he proceeds to a detailed study of her mental states and conditions, such as the classical states of heroines like *svādhīna-bhartṛkā* (in control of her lover), *vāsaka-sajjā* (dressed for meeting), *kalāhāntarītā* (remorseful after quarrel), and so on. As these examples are always connected with the intimate relationships in *mādhurya-rasa*, and may seem mundane to an untrained eye, they are not drawn into the thesis.

S. N. Shastri, in his work *The Laws of Sanskrit Drama*, seems to treat Rūpa Gosvāmī's devotional compendium, the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, as a regular dramatic treatise, and wonders why he has not treated the *nāyikās* in full, the *sādhārāṇī-nāyikā* variety and so on³³¹. But Rūpa Gosvāmī uses only those aesthetic and dramatic concepts that suit the circumstances of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, and has no interest whatsoever in the rest of the mundane dramatic theory.

At the end of the *sthāyi-bhāva-laharī* in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī adds a last comment: "If the *rati* of the associates of Rādhā is equal to or less than their *rati* directed to Kṛṣṇa, the *rati* directed to Rādhā is called *sañcāri-rati*, nourishing their *rati* towards Kṛṣṇa. But if the *rati* of Rādhā's associates directed to Rādhā is greater than that directed to Kṛṣṇa, and is constantly increasing, it is called *bhāvollāsa-rati*." (BRS, 2. 5. 128) This means that Rādhā who is usually the *āśraya*, receptacle of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, Herself becomes the *viṣaya*, the object of devotion for Her female companions. Such *bhāvollāsa-rati* is found in those young *gopīs* of Vraja who do not care to enjoy Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally, but find their highest joy in uniting Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The leader of such *gopīs*, called *mañjarīs*, is Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī.

8. 2. Public and Academic Presentation of Kṛṣṇa-līlā

This is a very delicate issue, and has been so in India as well as in the West ever since its beginning articulations. The scriptural basis of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya* is of course the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* where some of the intimate pastimes like *rāsa-līlā* and *vastra-hāra-līlā* are openly described. The policy of the *sampradāya* has been to keep these pastimes in the back, hidden from possible public misuse, or criticism

³³¹ S. N. Shastri, *Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama* (Varanasi, 1961), p. 217.

from the moral point of view. The issues demand extreme sensitivity in presentation, and are very vulnerable to distortion at the hands of the unqualified.

Throughout the many biographies of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a picture of him emerges always consistent with the highest degrees of renunciation. His massive preaching strategy had always been the loud, absorbing Hari-kīrtana, for which any person is immediately qualified. On the other hand, the intimate pastimes of the Lord were never discussed in public assemblies, as even the practicing devotees may not have the *adhikāra* to hear them, what to speak of the newcomers to the faith. In the seclusion of his residence in Kāśī Miśra's house in Jagannātha Purī, Śrī Caitanya privately relished the advanced poetry of Jayadeva, Caṇḍīdāsa and Vidyāpati, accompanied by a chosen few.

If unqualified persons hear the highest descriptions of loving exchanges between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, imagining them to be material, they may experience a reawakening of their wordly *vāsanās*, instead of these *vāsanās* becoming stifled and destroyed by *bhakti-yoga*. But the subject is eventually meant to be heard, and appreciated in a proper, spiritual perspective, which is why Rūpa Gosvāmī and the rest of the *Gauḍīya ācāryas* have offered their whole lives to preparing the scriptural basis of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti. Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-līlā is meant to touch our hearts in a properly profound way, with its supreme, ideal selflessness and the intensity of devotion. Keeping this in mind, we may indeed benefit from our contact with Kṛṣṇa-līlā, and thus fulfill the Lord's purpose of descending to attract us. And then, a healthy sign of attraction to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is its calming effect on mundane passions, and readiness to apply the full principles of *bhakti-yoga* to one's life.

*vikriḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

Anyone who faithfully hears or describes the Lord's playful affairs with the young *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana will attain the Lord's pure devotional service (*parā-bhakti*). Thus he will quickly become sober and conquer lust, the disease of the heart. (Bhāg. 10. 33. 39)

The issue is slightly more problematic in academic presentations of the *Gauḍīya-sampradāya*, where, especially in the West, the scholars are far from themselves being practitioners, and are often not even properly favorable to the topic. In the case of innocent, sympathetic and well-meaning scholars the damage is minimal, but this is rarely the case.

Because the West is much more relaxed in interpersonal relationships, the attention of Western scholars tends to drift more towards the extraordinary and the tempting within Hinduism – than towards the puritanistic and the orthodox. The

result is a very disproportionate interest in all kinds of misuses and malpractices vaguely inspired by Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa imagery³³². Often, the Western scholars of Hinduism are unable to perceive the subtle high degrees of personal morality and purity of the *Vaiṣṇava* practitioners, and upon learning about their philosophy of the extra-marital relationship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa seem to imagine that these *Vaiṣṇavas* do not distinguish between Kṛṣṇa-līlā and their own lives.

Often, the *Gauḍīya sampradāya* is then equated with the abominable malpractices of deranged *tāntriks*, as well as with the academic descriptions of these malpractices, and the cumulative effect of misrepresentation gains in size like a giant snowball.

Some Western scholars may themselves try to enter the world of *Vaiṣṇava* practitioners, with varying degrees of success³³³. Others are satisfied with merely gathering native informants, whom they often misinterpret and misrepresent in their publications. A glaring example of such injustice to Hinduism is documented in the book *Invading the Sacred*³³⁴.

Even sympathetic scholarship is severely limited because of its etic perspective, and can never carry the same conviction as the works of the practitioners themselves³³⁵. And last, my own involvement with these topics can also be seen by many stricter practitioners as an example of presumptuousness and impetuosity on the part of a young researcher, if also a practitioner. My attempt throughout has been to present *Gauḍīya-siddhānta* in its true light, and since it is practically impossible to avoid the esoteric topics, I pray that my presentation of them was grave and serious enough to match the depth of the theme.

³³² For example, Edward C. Dimock, in his work *The Place of the Hidden Moon*, fails to distinguish between orthodox *Vaiṣṇavism* and the *sahajīyā* heresy of indecent *tāntriks* who use Kṛṣṇa-līlā as an inspiration in their carnal practices. Or, June McDaniel in her *Madness of the Saints*, lumps together respected unpretentious *Vaiṣṇava* *bābājīs* and *Śākta tāntriks* of a questionable background, seemingly content with the fact that both seem like mad ascetics, unconcerned with the world and immersed in their inner lives, whatever they are.

³³³ David Haberman is an example, a married professor at an American university, who joined the *Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā* for a month with a group of native pilgrims. His experiences are recounted in *The Twelve Forests of Vraja – An Encounter with Krishna*. The work is ruined with his playful descriptions of secretly holding hands with a lonely pilgrim lady, and joyful encounters with a prostitute at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Needless to say, his repeated points about the pilgrims coming to Vraja to experience the ‘playfulness’ of Kṛṣṇa-līlā in their mortal bodies is totally mistaken.

³³⁴ K. Ramaswamy, A. de Nicolas, A. Banerjee, *Invading the Sacred – An Analysis of Hinduism Studies in America* (New Delhi 2007). The book reads like a criminal novel, a thorough description of a recent battle between the Indian diaspora in the US and the local American indologists, with their offensive biases and lack of sensibility in approaching, studying, representing another culture.

³³⁵ An example of sympathetic and diligently researched work is that of Donna Wulff, on the *Vidagdha-mādhava*. See References.

❧ *Chapter Nine* ❧

The Charming Mādhava

9. 1. Rūpa Gosvāmī's Poetic Genius

In the last two chapters, we turn to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's dramatic creations, his two masterpieces on Kṛṣṇa-līlā, the *Lalita-mādhava* and *Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭakas*. They were completed earlier than the two *rasa-śāstras* of Rūpa Gosvāmī, although he started a preliminary sketch probably some twenty years earlier, as documented in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*³³⁶. During his first visit to Vṛndāvana, he started to write a drama on the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and composed the *nāndī* verses as an auspicious introduction. He had been thinking on how to present the action of the drama, made a few notes and began to write. He and his younger brother Anupama then traveled back to Bengal, closely missing their elder brother Sanātana on the way who was right then traveling to Vṛndāvana in the opposite direction. Anupama unfortunately left this world at that point, and Rūpa Gosvāmī alone traveled on from Bengal to Jagannātha Purī to meet Śrī Caitanya. He happened to rest over night in a village in Orissa, called Satyabhāmāpura. While resting that night, he had a dream that a celestially beautiful lady came before him and gave him the following order, "Write a separate drama about me, by my mercy it will be extraordinarily beautiful." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya, 1. 42)

Rūpa Gosvāmī concluded that Śrīmatī Satyabhāmā, one of the principal Queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā, had ordered him to write a separate drama about her. When Lord Caitanya told him a similar thing in Purī ("Do not try to take Kṛṣṇa out of Vṛndāvana"), he was amply convinced that the subject matter of the two *līlās* had to be kept apart. That is how the original one drama came to be divided into two, and they are now known as *Vidagdha-mādhava*, describing the pastimes of Mādhava in Vṛndāvana, and *Lalita-mādhava*, moving the pastimes to the sphere of Dvārakā. The first of them was completed in the year 1532, and the second in the year 1537.

The main focus of the two dramas is of course the sentiment of *bhakti*, expressed in the lives of the characters, the eternal associates of the Lord, and serves as a potent via medium for the present devotees to enter the devotional sphere of Kṛṣṇa-līlā. Devotional dramas of this kind have a very different purpose to fulfil than mundane dramas whose only goal is entertainment. The two dramas of Rūpa Gosvāmī are often not even staged, due to their intimate and esoteric nature, but are privately read and relished deeply, as one scene after another exemplifies the magic beauty of *bhakti-rasa*. The action in the drama is secondary, and often the events are stringed

³³⁶ Rūpa Gosvāmī's second meeting with the Lord happened in the year 1515, shortly after his younger brother Anupama's untimely demise. Anupama is the father of Jīva and Jīva Gosvāmī's birth is usually calculated as 1513, and he was orphaned as a young boy. Completing the family obligations after the departure of Anupama, Rūpa Gosvāmī traveled to Purī to meet Lord Caitanya. The incident is described in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya, Chapter 1.

together in a loose fashion, not coming in any strictly ordered temporal scheme³³⁷. The devotional drama is not of this world, its concern is with the supernatural world of Goloka, where time is a mere sequence of events relating one to the Supreme Lord in love. As such, devotional dramas have little to offer to those whose devotional *saṁskāras* are lacking. This immediately becomes apparent when we study the contemporary summary works on Indian classical drama. While native Indian scholarship, being slightly pious and receptive to the ideals of devotion, always speaks of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in most respectful terms, Western scholars tend to be merciless and critical for no apparent reason, except perhaps their painful lack of *puṇya*. A. B. Keith for example, in his work *The Sanskrit Drama*, is extremely critical of many authors, not only of Rūpa Gosvāmī. A short quote will suffice,

The *Pratāpa-rudrīya* of Vidyānātha is a mediocre compilation from the *Daśarūpa* and the *Kāvya-prakāśa* of Mammaṭa, covering the whole field of poetics; it illustrates the formal rules of the drama by the composition of a wretched drama in honour of Pratāparudra of Warangal (...) Of much greater interest is Vidyādhara's *Ekāvalī*; (...) as a poet his merits are negligible, but he shows a lively interest in his subject and intelligence in his views. Of greater popularity than either is Viśvanātha Kavirāja, the author of the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, a general treatise on poetics. His handling of the drama is based largely on the *Daśa-rūpa* and its commentary, but he introduces a good deal of matter from the *Nāṭya-śāstra* in his sixth chapter, (...) which the *Daśa-rūpa* omits. In this Viśvanātha indicates his servile character, which, however, renders his work the more valuable as an exposition of the orthodox doctrine. (...) The lack of order and the errors in his work are made the basis of criticism by Rūpa Gosvāmī in the early part of the sixteenth century, but his own *Nāṭaka-candrikā* shows little improvement on the work of its predecessor, whence it draws much of its material; its real purpose is to eulogize the saint Caitanya whose disciple Rūpa was and in whose honour he composed dramas of no merit."³³⁸

To produce pages and pages of ruthless criticism is far from being any art, it is not even decent scholarship, and the ability to do so is far from the ability to write anything even close to perfection by oneself. I for one have never seen even one Sanskrit verse produced by any of these eloquent critics of Sanskrit literature. Their complete inability to relate to the purpose of devotional drama simply confirms the statement of Rūpa Gosvāmī in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*sarvathaiva durūho 'yam abhaktair bhagavad-rasaḥ
tat-pādāmbuja-sarvasvair bhaktair evānurasyate*

³³⁷ This is perhaps the case in the *Vidagdha-mādhava*.

³³⁸ A. B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama in its Origin, Development and Practice* (Delhi, 1992, originally published in 1923), pp. 293-4.

Rasa directed to the Lord is very difficult to understand for those with no devotion. Only those who have dedicated themselves completely to the lotus feet of Bhagavān can taste this *bhagavad-bhakti-rasa*. (BRS, 2. 5. 131)

And it is not only *bhakti-rasa* that remains hidden to non-devotee scholars, they fail to see any beauty in the seemingly static poetic descriptions of miniature facets of Kṛṣṇa-līlā, always hankering for artificial upsurges of dramatic action and conflict. It takes a very different heart to be able to appreciate the mellow softness of Rūpa Gosvāmī's poetic expressions. Western scholars, often insensitive and rough, are like wild elephants in a garden of strawberries.

And even within native Sanskrit poetic criticism, one often feels that there is not much originality in admitting excellences in particular poetic works. Whatever has been established by an authority on poetic theory is blindly copied by generations of lesser theorists, as if admitting that they do not see much beauty in a particular poetic piece would expose them as being without the ability of tasting poetry. And since not many really fully understand the abstruse footing of poetic theory, they are at a loss to find adequate examples of it on their own. *Dhvani* is praised over all other elements of poetic expression, but Rūpa Gosvāmī's works do not excel in mere *dhvani*, suggestion of sentiment per se. In his works, even the supreme notion of the standard poetic theory, *dhvani*, is subordinated to a very serious purpose. *Bhakti* does not denote mere savoring, relishing and enjoying poetic expressions and ecstasies, it is tied with one's whole being, overwhelming it and giving it purpose, of being a humble devotee surrendered in love and service to the Supreme Lord. Only by being a sincere practitioner of *bhakti-yoga* does one actually taste *bhakti-rasa*, otherwise even tasting the mellows of Kṛṣṇa-līlā remains a mere exercise in becoming excited by poetic *dhvani*.

Let us inspect Rūpa Gosvāmī's poetic works, and allow them to show their force of devotion to us, without applying to them the stereotyped measuring rods of achievement – that have been constructed for mundane genres of literature, diametrically opposed to the tasting of devotional *rasas*.

9. 1. 1. Rūpa Gosvāmī's Kāvya

His two famous *gīti-kāvya*s, modeled on Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*, are supreme specimens of devotional poetry. Usually the first of them, the *Haṃsadūta*, is usually understood to be the earliest work of Rūpa Gosvāmī, completed before he even met Lord Caitanya (which happened in 1513). This is probable, since the *namaskriyā* and the final verses do not contain an allusion to Mahāprabhu, which is the case in all his later works. The second of the two *dūta-kāvya*s, the *Uddhava-sandeśa*, was probably composed later. Its last verses may be interpreted as a glorification of Śrī

Caitanya, although they could also denote Rūpa Gosvāmī's elder brother Sanātana Gosvāmī.

If Rūpa Gosvāmī's practical application of the styles and literary genres used before him to suit his own transcendent purposes is overly stressed by the critics, it may adversely affect the depth of our appreciation of his works. He was not a plagiarist, but an extremely subtle, refined compiler who took advantage of the previous poets' descriptions of emotion, and of the techniques they used to describe them. Any poet coming before him has thus offered his work unknowingly to the Supreme Lord of Rūpa Gosvāmī's heart who is always described by the choicest of poetry, Uttamaśloka. He is the one who rightly deserves all praise, and Rūpa Gosvāmī has demonstrated this fact in offering a collection of *stutis* to His beloved Lord, Govinda, composed in the manner of *biruds* (that is usually a genre used by royal bards)³³⁹. Govindadeva is the actual king of Vṛndāvana, of Jaipur, of the whole world, and the purpose of all poetry is to acknowledge that and praise Him. All creation falls into place within the worldview of *bhakti*, and all universal energies are submissive to one who is fully devoted to the Lord. One of the many *siddhis* of a pureminded saint is that whatever he would need in his own work is supplied to him without any effort on his part, since he is completely aligned in purpose with the Lord of all creation. Rūpa Gosvāmī's use of various existing literary moulds for his extraordinary devotional poetry should be understood in this manner.

The *Haṁsadūta* describes the anguish of the *gopīs* of Vṛndavana after Śrī Kṛṣṇa has left for Mathurā. Lalitā, despondent in her efforts to help Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, expresses her helplessness to a nearby swan, imagining him to be a suitable carrier of a message to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā. The work is written in the *śikhariṇī* meter.

*kadācit khedāgnim vighaṭayitum antargatam asau
sahālibhir lebhe taralita-manā yāmuna-taṭim
cirād asyās cittam paricita-kuṭīra-kalanād
avasthā tastāra sphuṭam atha suṣupteḥ priya-sakhī*

*tadā niṣpandāṅgī kalita-nalinī-pallava-kulaiḥ
pariṇāhāt prema-nāma-kuśala-śatāśaṅki-hṛdayaiḥ
dṛg-ambho-gambhīrī-kṛta-mihira-putrī-laharībhiḥ
vilinā dhulīnām upari parivavre parijanaiḥ*

*tatas tām nyastāṅgīm urasi lalitāyāḥ kamalinī
palāśaiḥ kālindī-salila-śīśirair vijita-tanum
parāvṛta-śvāsāṅkura-calita-kaṇṭhim kalayatām
sakhī-sandohānām pramada-bhara-śālī dhvanir abhūt*

nidhāyāṅke paṅkeruha-dala-viṭaṅkasya lalitā

³³⁹ The Govinda-birudāvalī is included in his *Stava-mālā*.

*tato rādhām nīrāharāṇa-saraṇau nyasta-caraṇā
milantaṁ kālindī-pulina-bhuvi khelāñcita-gatiṁ
dadarsāgre kaṁcin madhura-virutaṁ śveta-garutam*

*tadāloka-stokocchvasita-hṛdayā sādaram asau
praṇāmaṁ śaṁsantī laghu laghu samāsādyā savidham
dhṛtotkaṇṭhā sadyo hari-sadasi sandeśa-haraṇe
varam dūtaṁ mene tam ati-lalitā hanta lalitā*

*amarṣāt premerṣyām sapadi dadhatī kaṁsa-mathane
pravṛttā haṁsāya svam abhilaṣitaṁ śaṁsitum asau
na tasyā doṣo 'yaṁ yad iha vihagaṁ prārthitavati
na kasmin viśrambhaṁ diśati hari-bhakti-praṇayitā*

One day Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī went to the bank of the Yamunā with Her dearest friends being desirous of extinguishing the fire of separation in which She was burning. However, upon seeing a cottage which was the site of Her many meetings with Kṛṣṇa, She again became intensely absorbed in those memories. At that time, Her friend Suśupti came and rendered her unconscious to protect Her from the agony of separation.

Rādhārāṇī's *sakhīs* lay Her motionless body on a bed of soft lotus stems and surrounding Her began to fan Her with lotus leaves. Due to their intense love for Her they began to fear that some great adversity was imminent and they began to cry with such intensity that the waves of the Yamunā began to break higher with their tears.

Lalitā then held the quiet Rādhā against her breast and sprinkled Her with the waters of the Yamunā from the lotus leaf with which she was fanning Her. Rādhā's throat quivered with the faintest signs of breathing at which the *sakhīs*, relieved, rejoiced loudly.

Lalitā again put Śrīmatī down to lie on the lotus bed and rose to bring water for Her from the river. As she stepped forward she saw a beautiful, dazzling white swan moving towards her most gracefully while making a sweet sound.

Lalitā became a little encouraged at the sight of the charming bird and welcomed it respectfully. Stepping lightly toward it out of curiosity she became more and more eagerly hopeful and began to believe that this bird was a suitably qualified messenger to convey the depressed state of their minds to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā. (*Hamsadūta*, verses 3-8)³⁴⁰

After describing to the swan the path to Mathurā, where many stops will remind him of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, she tells him about Lord Kṛṣṇa living in Mathurā. She instructs the swan to see if the Lord of the Yadus is happy, and if that is so, to not even start telling Him about the suffering of the *gopīs*. But if the fragrant breezes

³⁴⁰ I use the electronic version from the [www.gaudiyagranthamandira](http://www.gaudiyagranthamandira.com), and work with an anonymous translation available within the 'Acarya Folio' subset of the Bhaktivedanta Vedabase. I have also consulted Kuśakratha Prabhu's translation, but this other one is more satisfactory.

from Govardhana and the sound of the cuckoos perching on the terrace of His palace will remind the Lord of Vṛndāvana, then only, she says, should you convey my message to Him.

*purā tiṣṭhan goṣṭhe nikhila-ramañibhyaḥ priyatayā
bhavān yasyām gopī-ramaṇa vidadhe gaurava-bharam
sakhī tasyā vijñāpayati lalitā dhīra-lalita
praṇamya śrī-pādāmbuja-kanaka-piṭhī-parisare*

*kim āviṣṭā bhūtaiḥ sapadi yadi vākrūra-phaṇinā
kṣatāpasmāreṇa cyuta-matir akasmāt kim āpatat
iti vyagrair asyām gurubhir abhitaḥ kīcaka-rava-
śravād aspandāyām mura-hara vikalpā vidadhire*

*aye rāsa-kriḍā-rasika mama sakhyām nava-navā
purā baddhā yena praṇaya-laharī hanta gahanā
sa cen muktāpekṣas tvam api dhig imām tūla-śakalam
yad etasyā nāsā-nihitam idam adyāpi calati*

*mukunda bhrāntākṣī kim api yad asaṁkalpita-śataṁ
vidhatte tad vaktum jagati manu-jaḥ kaḥ prabhavati
kadācit kalyāṇī vilapati ya utkaṇṭhita-matis
tad ākhyāmi svāmin gamaya makarottaṁsa-padaṁ*

*garīyān me premā tvayi param iti sneha-laghutā
na jīviṣyāmīti praṇaya-garima-khyāpana-vidhiḥ
katham nāyāsīti sva-vaśa-paripāṭi-prakaṭanam
harau sandeśāya priya-sakhi na me vāg avasaraḥ*

*mano me hā kaṣṭam jvalati kim aham hanta karavai
na pāram nāvāram kimapi kalayāmy asya jala-dheḥ
iyam vande mūrdhnā sapadi tam upāyam kathaya mām
patāmṣye yasmād dhṛti-kaṇikayāpe kṣaṇikayā*

This is my message, please repeat to Him exactly what I say to you now: "O Lord of the gopīs, o charming hero! Please lend Your ears to that which is now being submitted to You by Lalitā who is the dearest friend of that gopī whom You loved above all others when You resided here in Vṛndāvana. She offers her respectful obeisances in front of Your feet, resting on a golden footstool.

O destroyer of Mura! When Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī faints at the whistling sound of the bamboos in the wind [remembering the sound of Your flute] the elders become puzzled and search for the cause of Her malady. Some fear that She has been possessed by spirits, some apprehend that she was bitten by some cruel serpent [not knowing that actually yes, She has been bitten by that snake Akrūra]. Others ascribe the cause to epilepsy, but no one actually knows.

O Kṛṣṇa! Expert enjoyer of the *rāsa* dance! If You have truly forsaken that Rādhā with whom You once created a love which deepened in intensity at every moment, then curses on this swab of cotton which we are holding before Her nose and which indicates that there is still some slight bit of life within Her.

O Mukunda! Who on this earth can narrate the hundreds of things that Rādhārāṇī prattles in Her delirious state? O Lord! Let me repeat some of those utterances. Please make these statements enter into Your beautiful ears which are decorated by dolphin shaped earrings.

Rādhā says: “I do not know the words which could be used in a message to Him. If I say, ‘I love You very much’, that sounds too light. If I say, ‘I cannot live without You’, it seems I am advertising My pretentious love, and if I say ‘Why do you not come back to Vṛndāvana?’ then it will seem that we are trying to control Him.

My mind is burning up! How terrible! What should I do? I can see no shore on either side of this great ocean of suffering into which I have fallen. I am making this prayer with My head bowed – somebody please tell me how I can cross over, or at least how I can have the patience to tolerate the situation.” (*Hamsadūta*, 76, 80, 96, 98, 99, 104)

Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Uddhava-sandeśa* is a similar composition describing Kṛṣṇa’s side of the painful separation, as He is forced to remain in Mathurā, but yearns to again experience the love of the Vraja-gopīs. He reveals His heart to His close companion Uddhava. The work is a string of wonderful verses in the *mandākrāntā* metre.

*tvaṁ sarveṣāṁ mama guṇa-nidhe bāndhavānāṁ pradhānam
tvatto mantraiḥ śriyam avicalāṁ yādavāḥ sādhayanti
ity āśvāsād abhimata-vidhau kāmāye tvāṁ niyoktum
nyastaḥ sādhyasi saphalatāṁ artha-bhāro hi dhatte*

*saṁrambheṇa kṣiti-pati-girāṁ lambhite garvitānāṁ
vṛndāraṇyān mayi madhu-purīm gāndinī-nandanena
vallavyas tāḥ viraha-dahana-jvālikā-maṇḍalināṁ
antar-līnāḥ katham apī sakhe jīvitam dhārayanti*

*prāṇebhyo me praṇaya-vasatir mitra tatrāpi rādhā
dhātuh sṛṣṭau madhurima-dharādhāraṇād advitīyā
vāco-yukti-stavakita-padair adya seyaṁ sakhīnāṁ
gādhāśvāsair vidhura-vidharam prāṇa-bhāram bibharti*

*gatvā nandīśvara-śikhariṇo mekhalāṁ ratna-bhūtāṁ
tvāṁ vallibhir valayita-nagāṁ vallavādhīśa-pallim
tām daṣṭāṅgīm viraha-phaṇinā prāṇayan prīṇayārtām
vārtā-mantra-dhvanibhir atha me mantri-cūḍāmaṇīndra*

*tiṣṭhanty ete jagati bahavas tvad-vidhānāṁ vidhātum
cetaḥ pūrtim nanu jana-padā mūrtibhir me sanāthāḥ
bhūyo bhūyaḥ priya-sakha śape tubhyam avyājato 'ham*

bhūr anyā me hṛdi sukha-karā goṣṭhataḥ kāpi nāsti

*mad-viśleṣa-jvalana-paṭalī-jvālayā jarjarāṅgiḥ
sarve tasmin nidhana-padaviṁ śākhino 'py āśrayiṣyan
gopī-netrāvali-vigalitair bhūribhir bāṣpa-vārāṁ
pūrais teṣāṁ yadi niravadhir nābhiṣeko 'bhaviṣyat*

*ātma-kleṣair api nahi tathā meru-tuṅgair vyathante
vallavyas tāḥ priya-sakha yathā mad-vyathā-leśato 'pi
durvārāṁ me viraha-vihitāṁ nihnuvānas tathāpi
prema-granthiṁ tvam ati-prthulaṁ tāsū vikhyāpayethāḥ*

Oh ocean of virtues, Uddhava, you are My closest relative. Due to your advice and directions, we Yādavas are enjoying full prosperity. For these reasons I wish to give you the service of fulfilling a very secret desire of Mine. If one gives one's desired work to a person full of good qualities, then he can be sure of the result.

O My friend! When we heard from Akrūra about the king's arrogant order, we came along with him from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā. At that time the young Vraja-gopīs entered into an ocean of separation from Me. O My dear friend! Now they are somehow or other keeping their life-force within their bodies.

O My friend! Of all those gopīs, beautiful Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who has no equal and is more dear to Me than My life, is somehow remaining alive due to Lalitā and Her other gopī friends tactfully convincing Her with many promising speeches about My return.

O best of advisers, Uddhava! Please go to Nandagrāma, the capital of Nanda Mahārāja, which is situated on a beautiful hill covered with wonderful creepers, with the best of trees, and surrounded by a wall made of priceless jewels. There, kindly deliver My message to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī who has been bitten by the snake of separation and is feeling unlimited anguish in Her heart. Please try to bring her back to life and make Her happy again.

O My dear friend! In this world, there are many holy and important places where I appear in various Deity forms to bring happiness to My pure devotees like yourself. But I honestly swear to you that there is no place which brings more happiness to My heart than Gokula (Vraja).

In the abode of Vraja, what to speak of the moving beings, even the trees, creepers, grass and other non-moving entities would have been burnt up in the fire of separation long ago, if the streams of tears of the gopīs would not drench them.

My dear friend! When the gopīs would see Me even a little distressed, they became very unhappy, but they would not become even a little distressed if a mountain of unhappiness came upon them. Therefore, please do not tell them about the unlimited unhappiness I am experiencing due to separation from them, simply remind them how much I love them. (*Uddhava-sandēśa*, verses 4-10)³⁴¹

³⁴¹ I use the edition presented by Padmalocan Das that circulates among the Gaudīya devotees. My purpose here is not to attempt to overturn every sentence in the translation in the supposed direction of improvement, but to present a fairly accurate translation where the transparency and unassertive

9. 1. 2. Transcendent Poetry

Rūpa Gosvāmī emerges as a subtle knower of the most gentle and delicate feelings, which, however, are exclusively reserved for the dealings between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. In his anthology of verses on *bhakti* and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*, the famous *Padyāvalī*, Rūpa Gosvāmī brings together the scattered glorifications produced by many poets, thus saving them from oblivion³⁴². Some of the verses may have been written as a mere flash of inspiration on mundane *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the worldly reflection of the spiritual attachment. But if the theme is suitable and not antagonistic to the ideals of Vraja-*bhakti*, he includes them in the collection, perhaps adjusting a word or two, like changing the word *kāntā* into Rādhā³⁴³. He persistently uplifts mundane poetry into its spiritual ideal, of the attraction of the *jīvātmā* to the Supreme *Ātmā*. Above such neutral attraction without any distinctions glistens the spiritual world with its amazing variety of residents full of *prema*, and pastimes with the Lord of their hearts. The playfulness of their *līlā* should entrance us and make us forget our identification with the world of dull matter.

*yad-avadhi yamunāyās tīra-vānīra-kuñje
mura-ripu-pada-līlā locanābhyām aloki
tad-avadhi mama cittam kutracit kārya-mātre
na hi lagati muhūrtaṁ kim vidheyam na jāne*

Ever since I caught a glimpse of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes on the bank of the Yamunā river, in a thicket of reeds, my heart does not allow me even a moment to focus on my work. What should I do? (*Padyāvalī*, verse 167, composed by Śrī Kavicandra)

A copy of Goloka descends with the Lord at the time of His pastimes on earth, and remains here, as a reminder of His presence. Even today, thousands of pilgrims revisit the places of His *līlā*, offer *ārati* to the divine river Yamunā at Keśī Ghāt, and circumambulate the forest of Vṛndāvana. Devotional poetry becomes a potent medium to transpose them back into the *līlās* that have been happening here five thousand years ago, and into which a reentrance is sought through a deep immersion in their descriptions.

nature of the presenters (translators, editors and so on) helps the *sāmājikas*, in this case the readers, experience the potent poetic genius and deep *bhakti* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

³⁴² The *Padyāvalī* is a collection of 386 verses gathered from 125 less known authors, *Vaiṣṇavas*, poets and others, with the exception of the known *Vaiṣṇavite* works like those of Jayadeva and Bilvamaṅgala. Some of the verses are by Rūpa Gosvāmī himself. Sushil Kumar De has published an edition based on sixteen manuscripts (Dacca 1934).

³⁴³ Sushil Kumar De in his edition of the *Padyāvalī* calls it 'vaiṣṇavizing the verses', and lists the changes. In the Introduction, p. cxii, and on p. 200 of the main text.

*atrāsīt kila nanda-sadma śakaṭasyātrābhavad bhañjanam
bandha-ccheda-karo 'pi dāmabhir abhūd baddho 'tra dāmodaraḥ
itthaṁ māthura-vṛddha-vaktra-vigalat-pīyūṣa-dhārām pibann
ānandāśru-dharaḥ kadā madhu-purīm dhanyaś carīṣyāmy aham*

When will I be so fortunate to be able to visit the area of Vraja, crying tears of bliss while drinking the stream of nectar flowing from the mouth of an old resident of Mathurā: 'Nanda's house was here. This is where Kṛṣṇa broke the cart. Here Dāmodara, who cuts the bonds of mundane existence, was bound up by ropes.' (*Padyāvalī* 121, quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1. 3. 40)³⁴⁴

Without any extraneous effort, the eager devotees who simply adore Dāmodara and His sweet *līlā*, find themselves bound to Him in love, while their mundane affections slacken. Who could resist the appeal of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *Vṛndāvana-līlā*, and who would not envy His fortunate associates who share the bliss of such playful existence, the ultimate universal drama, far from the frightening and painful dream of mundane identification? Upon visiting the places of the Lord's pastimes, the devotees eagerly pray to be cheated by the Lord, and thus avoid being cheated by the Lord's illusory potency. Even today, Vraja is decorated with the glorious Govardhana Hill, the emblem of all transcendent joy and fun. In the lap of Govardhana is the sacred Mānasī Gaṅgā lake, the site of the Lord's humorous pastimes in an old rotten boat.

*pānīya-secana-vidhau mama naiva pāṇi
viśramyatas tad api te parihāsa-vāṇi
jīvāmi cet punar ahaṁ na tadā kadāpi
kṛṣṇa tvadīya-taraṇau caraṇau dadāmi*

My arms are tired. I cannot continue with throwing out the water. But You do not stop Your joking. O Kṛṣṇa, if I survive this, I will never again put my feet into Your boat. (*Padyāvalī*, verse 276, by Śrī Manohara)

Rūpa Gosvāmī gained the full confidence of his master, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, with his sharp ability to distinguish mundane poetry from the transcendent. An incident during their second meeting in Purī is well-known. Mahāprabhu ecstatically danced during the annual *Ratha-yātrā* festival of Lord Jagannātha, absorbed in the mood of the *gopīs* who are calling Śrī Kṛṣṇa back to *Vṛndāvana*³⁴⁵. He recited a verse found in mundane compendiums of poetic theory, authored by Śilā Bhaṭṭarikā³⁴⁶:

³⁴⁴ In his commentary to the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Jīva Gosvāmī clarifies that the word *madhu-purī* actually refers to the whole Mathurā-*maṇḍala*, or Vraja-*maṇḍala*. This is clear from the verse itself which describes places in Gokula, far away from the city of Mathurā.

³⁴⁵ The *Ratha-yātrā* esoterically represents the time when, during a solar eclipse, the residents of *Vṛndāvana* and the residents of *Dvārakā* met in the holy place of Kurukṣetra. After tens and tens of years, the *gopīs* of *Vṛndāvana* and the rest of the Vraja-*vāsīs* finally meet Kṛṣṇa again. But they

yaḥ kaumāra-haraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra-kṣapās
 te conmīlita-mālatī-surabhayaḥ prauḍhāḥ kadambānilāḥ
 sā caivāsmi tathāpi tatra surata-vyāpāra-lilā-vidhau
 revā-rodhasi vetasī-taru-tale cetaḥ samutkaṇṭhate

That very personality who stole my heart during my youth is now again my master. These are the same moonlit nights of the month of Caitra. The same fragrance of *mālatī* flowers is there, and the same sweet breezes are blowing from the *kadamba* forest. In our intimate relationship, I am also the same lover, yet still my mind is not happy here. I am eager to go back to that place on the bank of the river Revā under the *vetasī* tree. That is my desire. (Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya, 1. 78)

Rūpa Gosvāmī noted the sentiments hinted at in the verse and understood Mahāprabhu's mind. He composed another verse with a similar meaning, but made the relationship and the occasion explicit, the meeting of Rādhā with Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra, after long years of separation.

priyaḥ so 'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari kuru-kṣetra-militas
 tathāham sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
 tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcama-juṣe
 mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya spṛhayati

My dear friend, now I have met My very old and dear friend Kṛṣṇa on this field of Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhā, and now we are meeting again. It is very pleasant, but I would still like to go to the bank of the Yamunā beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of His sweet flute playing the fifth note within that forest of Vṛndāvana. (Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya, 1. 79)

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja narrates the whole incident. Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote the verse on a palm leaf, and then kept it on the thatched roof of his hut and went to bathe in the sea at Purī. In the meantime, Śrī Caitanya visited him and saw the palm leaf sticking out of the roof. He read the verse, and became overwhelmed with ecstasy. He showed the verse to his close assistant, Svarūpa Dāmodara, and both concluded that Rūpa Gosvāmī has a unique ability to understand Mahāprabhu's mind. A few days later, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in front of Rūpa Gosvāmī's hut, accompanied with close associates, eager to glorify Rūpa Gosvāmī's poetic gift.

express a slight disappointment due to the changed circumstances, and beg Him to come back to the beautiful Vṛndāvana forest.

³⁴⁶ The verse is quoted in the *Kāvya-prakāśa* of Mammaṭa, right after his definition of poetry (1. 4), which, he says, can possess distinct poetic embellishments or not. The verse is an example where there are no separate embellishments, it is a case of *dhvani* fully predominating, and is not a *rasavad-alankāra*. Mammaṭa ascribes the verse to a lady poet Śilā Bhāṭṭarikā, on the authority of the *Sūkti-muktāvalī*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, 'My dear Rūpa, please recite that verse from your drama which, upon being heard, makes all people's unhappiness and lamentation go away.'

When the Lord persisted in asking this again and again, Rūpa Gosvāmī recited that verse³⁴⁷.

*tuṇḍe tāṇḍavini ratim vitanute tuṇḍāvalī-labdhaye
karṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambinī ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyaḥ spṛhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgana-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyāṇāṁ kṛtim
no jāne janitā kiyadbhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī*

I do not know how much nectar the two syllables Kṛṣṇa have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert.

When all the devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, especially Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, heard this verse, they were all filled with transcendental bliss and were struck with wonder.

Everyone admitted that although they had heard many statements glorifying the holy name of the Lord, they had never heard such sweet descriptions as those of Rūpa Gosvāmī. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya, 1. 118-122)

Rāmānanda Rāya, a confidential associate of Śrī Caitanya, met with the Lord during his travels around South India, in present-day Rajahmundry near the river Godāvarī. He was a government official of the extensive kingdom of Orissa, serving under Gajapati Mahārāja Pratāparudra as the governor of the province of Madras, but he gave up his post to join Śrī Caitanya in Purī. His aesthetic abilities and sensibilities were extraordinary, and he himself wrote a musical *nāṭaka* similar to the *Gīta-govinda* of Jayadeva, named the *Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka*³⁴⁸, which was performed in the Purī temple for the sole pleasure of Jagannātha Svāmī. Rāmānanda Rāya was especially appreciative and curious about Rūpa Gosvāmī's poetic creations, and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* narrates that he questioned him at great length about various aspects of dramatic composition. Asking about the introductory verses for both of the dramas, Rūpa Gosvāmī shyly recited them, and Śrī Caitanya, noticing that they glorify him, protested that the sweet poetry has been destroyed with bitter acids. No one agreed³⁴⁹. Rāmānanda Rāya, praising Rūpa Gosvāmī's genius, inquired

³⁴⁷ The verse is included in the *Vidagdha-mādhava*, 1. 15.

³⁴⁸ A study of his *saṅgīta-nāṭaka* has been published by Smt. Rajalaxmi Swain, *The Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka with Introduction and Translation*, (Delhi, 2002).

³⁴⁹ Rāmānanda Rāya countered that Rūpa Gosvāmī had inserted a piece of aromatic camphor into his nectarean poetry, and Śrī Caitanya sighed: "My dear Rāmānanda Rāya, you are jubilant at hearing these poetic expressions, but I am ashamed to hear them, for people in general will joke about the subject of this verse." Rāmānanda Rāya again disagreed, "Instead of joking, people will feel great

about the details of his two dramas, the kinds of entrances of characters, descriptions of *uddīpanas* such as the beauty of the forest of Vṛndāvana, and asked about the descriptions of *pūrva-rāga*, attachment prior to meeting, of the *gopīs* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rūpa Gosvāmī recited the following verse (from the *Vidagdha-mādhava*, 2. 9), stating Rādhārāṇī's confusion:

*ekasya śrutam eva lumpati matim kṛṣṇeti nāmākṣaram
sāndronmāda-paramparām upanayaty anyasya varṇśī-kalah
eṣa snigdha-ghana-dyutir manasi me lagnaḥ paṭe vīkṣaṇāt
kaṣṭham dhik puruṣa-traye ratir abhūn manye mṛtiḥ śreyasī*

Since I have heard the name of a person called Kṛṣṇa, I have practically lost my good sense. Then, there is another person who plays His flute in such a way that after I hear the vibration, intense madness arises in my heart. And again, there is still another person to whom my mind becomes attached when I see His beautiful effulgence resembling lightning in His picture. Therefore I think that I am greatly condemned, for I have become simultaneously attached to three persons. It would be better for Me to die because of this. (Quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya, 1. 142)

After hearing Rūpa Gosvāmī recite a row of beautiful verses he has composed so far, the associates of Caitanya Mahāprabhu were astonished. Rāmānanda Rāya praised his poetic ability, and declared that it was an amazing mercy of Śrī Caitanya, who desired to present the *bhakti-rasas* of Vraja to the whole world. Rūpa Gosvāmī was the crest-jewel of such empowered devotees, which is confirmed in the famous *praṇāma-mantra* to him³⁵⁰. Let us now turn to a more detailed analysis of his two *nāṭakas*. The *Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭaka* will grace the pages of this chapter, while a study of the *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka* is spared for the next chapter, along with the theory of dramaturgy delineated in Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Nāṭaka-candrikā*.

9. 2. The *Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭaka*

The following is a short appreciation of the contents of the *Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭaka*. It describes the Lord's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, in seven acts³⁵¹:

happiness in hearing such poetry, for the initial remembrance of the worshipable Deity invokes good fortune." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya, 1. 181-2)

³⁵⁰ *śrī-caitanya-mano-bhīṣaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti svapadāntikam*, "When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established the cherished desire of Lord Caitanya in this world [the preaching of the divine *bhakti-rasas*], accept me near his lotus feet?"

³⁵¹ As has been done in previous chapters of the thesis, the intimate pastimes of the Divine couple will not be delineated in full, due to the highly esoteric nature of the theme, and the danger of gross misunderstanding.

- 1) *Veṇu-nāda-vilāsa*, The Pastimes of Flute-music
- 2) *Manmatha-lekha*: The Love-letter
- 3) *Rādhā-saṅga*: The Meeting with Rādhā
- 4) *Veṇu-haraṇa*: The Theft of the Flute
- 5) *Rādhā-prasādana*: Appeasing Śrī Rādhā
- 6) *Śarad-vihāra*: Autumn Pastimes
- 7) *Gaurī-tīrtha-vihāra*: Pastimes at Gaurī-tīrtha

At the outset of the first act, which begins with a *prastāvanā* (prologue), Rūpa Gosvāmī in his usual humble manner apologizes for being the author of the work.

*mamāsmi sandarbhe yad api kavita nātilalitā
mudam dhāsyanty asyām tad api hari-gandhād budha-gaṇāḥ
apaḥ śālagrāmāplavana-garimodgāra-sarasāḥ
sudhiḥ ko vā kaupīr api namita-mūrdhā na pibati*

Although the poetry in my play is not very beautiful, the wise will take delight in it, for it bears the scent of Lord Hari. Even ordinary well-water changes into nectar after it bathes the glorious Śālagrāma, and the intelligent drink it, bowing their heads. (*Vidagdha-mādhava*, 1. 4)³⁵²

Himself accepting the role of the *sūtra-dhara* (stage manager) in the prologue, Rūpa Gosvāmī expresses his apprehension that those who have no taste for devotional poetry will not like the drama. The *pāripārśvika* (the assistant of the *sūtra-dhara*) consoles him that those who know how to taste nectar will be delighted to see the play while those who are not able to relish the *bhakti-rasas* will ignore it. Camels do not care for the mango buds which delight the cuckoos. The author reveals that he was ordered by Lord Śiva in a dream to stage a drama about the Lord's pastimes³⁵³. The drama seems to have been staged in the vicinity of the original Govindadeva temple (which was not yet fully built at the time), near the Yamunā and the Keśī-tīrtha. Rūpa Gosvāmī hopes to soothe the feelings of separation of the *rasika* devotees who have come to visit Vṛndāvana, and who roll in its dust, crying and sighing.

The plot of the drama is enriched with all the elements which make the earthly Vṛndāvana-līlā so supremely relishable and intense, both for the Lord and His associates, and for us as the removed audience of the events. After having clearly

³⁵² I use the edition prepared by Pandit Ramakant Jha, with the Hindi commentary. (Varanasi, 1970). The numbering of verses will follow his edition. In the wording of the English translation, I mostly comply with the version of Kuśakratha Prabhu (unpublished manuscript). I acknowledge my debt to the helpful thesis on the *Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭaka* by Donna M. Wulff (see References).

³⁵³ Lord Śiva resides in Vṛndāvana in different forms, as Gopīśvara in the town of Vṛndāvana, as Bhūteśvara in Mathurā, as Kāmeśvara in Kāmyavana, and as Cakreśvara at Govardhana Hill. His role is subordinate and supportive of the Vṛndāvana-līlā.

established the spiritual nature of Kṛṣṇa-līlā, far above the censure of mundane morality, we can proceed with the actual theme of the drama.

The relationship between the Lord and the gopīs of Vraja, especially Śrīmatī Rādhikā, is made even sweeter and deeper through the existence of obstacles, seemingly serious and insurmountable, but then again insignificant and submissive to the līlā, by the able orchestration of the Yoga-māyā potency. In the first act of the *Vidagdha-mādhava*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā develop mutual attraction (*purvarāga*) before Their actual meeting. *Yogamāyā* has arranged that Rādhārāṇī is married to a *gopa* named Abhimanyu. Her residence thus shifts from Varṣāṇā, the palace of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu, to the village Yāvat, where she shares the home with an elderly mother-in-law Jaṭilā and her daughter Kuṭilā. The influence and additional relish that these two personalities give to Kṛṣṇa-līlā is not exactly matched with their intelligence and beauty. In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, under the heading of a hidden lover, the role of which Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepts in relation to Rādhārāṇī, Rūpa Gosvāmī cites a humorous example from the *Padyāvalī* (verse 206):

saṅketī-kṛta-kokilādi-ninadam kaṁsa-dviṣaḥ kurvato
dvāronmocana-lola-śaṅkha-valaya-kvāṇam muhuḥ śṛṇvataḥ
keyam keyam iti pragalbha-jaratī-vākyena dūnātmano
rādhā-prāṅgana-koṇa-koli-viṭapi-kroḍe gatā śarvarī

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa stole into Rādhā's courtyard to meet with Her, He made a secret sound for Her, imitating a cuckoo and other birds. The door opened, and there was a continuous sound of bracelets made of conches. But then the bold old woman started calling out, 'Who is there? Who is there?' His heart disappointed, He spent the night in the corner of the courtyard, hiding up in a tree of wild plums.

It cannot be stressed enough that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the undisputable Supreme Lord in His highest aspect and most intimate form, fully able and eager to reciprocate with the pure love of Śrī Rādhā, His *hlādinī-śakti* personified, and hosts of other Vraja-gopīs who are Her expansions. Keeping this in mind, let us plunge into His līlā.

9. 2. 1. The *Veṇu-nāda-vilāsa*

The first act of the *Vidagdha-mādhava* describes the efforts of Paurṇamāsī, the elderly matron of the *Vṛndāvana-līlā*³⁵⁴, to unite Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa despite the obstacle personified in the family of Abhimanyu, and threats from Mathurā where even King Kaṁsa seems to have heard about Rādhārāṇī's beauty.

³⁵⁴ She was sent to Vraja by her son, Sāndīpani Muni, and she traveled from Ujjain along with her grandson Madhumaṅgala and granddaughter Nāndīmukhī.

In the prelude (*viṣkambhaka*), through a discussion between Paurṇamāsī and her granddaughter Nāndīmukhī, we learn of Rādhikā's *pūrvārāga*, occasioned by the mere utterance of the word Kṛṣṇa. Nāndīmukhī, saddened by the turn of recent events, asks Paurṇamāsī why she has not intervened in the sad match of Rādhā with Abhimanyu, when Rādhā will never be able to tolerate the touch of anyone other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Paurṇamāsī reveals that the marriage was the work of Yogamāyā to trick king Kāṁsa, and to keep Rādhā close to where Kṛṣṇa is. Paurṇamāsī orders that Viśākhā, a close friend of Rādhā, should paint a picture of Kṛṣṇa and show it to her mistress. Paurṇamāsī herself proceeds to allure Kṛṣṇa with the name of Rādhā.

The actual act opens with the scene of the cowherd boys, headed by Balarāma, Madhumaṅgala and Śrīdāma, who eagerly surround Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the company of His parents. His affectionate mother and father embrace Him, and mother Yaśodā lovingly asks why He has forgotten to come home in the afternoon. His humorous *brāhmaṇa* friend Madhumaṅgala, son of Sāndīpani Muni, who has come with his grandmother to Vraja and was blessed with the entrance into the inner circle of the cowherd boys, attempts to explain:

Madhumaṅgala: O Queen of Gokula, please listen. (*attempts to coin a verse*)

gobhyaḥ śape kim api dūṣaṇam asya nāsti

"I swear on the cows that Kṛṣṇa is not at fault." (*Kṛṣṇa looks at him affectionately*)

*tābhir yad eṣa rabhasād abhikṛṣyamāṇaḥ
kuñjaṁ viśaty adhika-keli-kalotsukābhīḥ*

"He stays in the forest so late because He is lured to the *kuñjas* by all these playful ..." (*his speech is broken*)

Kṛṣṇa (*embarrassed, aside*): This simpleton will now disclose My pastimes with the *gopīs*. I must signal him to stop. (*shakes His head*)

Madhumaṅgala: O friend, why do You stop me as I speak to Your saintly mother?

Kṛṣṇa (*aside*): Alas, because of this fool I have fallen into a trap of embarrassment.

Madhumaṅgala: Dear mother, what I meant to say is (*he gallantly concludes the verse*)

pītāmbaras tvaṛitam amba suhṛd-ghaṭābhīḥ

“O mother, He who wears a lovely yellow silk, stays in the forest to play with multitudes of His friends, the cowherd boys³⁵⁵.”

After a short discussion between Nanda and Yaśodā about a suitable girl to be married with their naughty Kṛṣṇa, they conclude He is still too young, and the cowherd boys ask for permission to stay in the pastures with the cows for some more time. Śrī Kṛṣṇa decides to delight everyone with the sound of His flute.

Balarāma: Look! Everything is becoming the opposite of its natural state! When Kṛṣṇa, playing on the bank of the Yamunā, kisses His flute, the waters of the streams become stunned and solid, the rocks become soft and melt, and the mountains, no longer standing still, tremble and walk about.

Madhumāṅgala: O, o, wonderful! Drinking the flood of nectar which is the sweet sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, the cows are stunned with bliss. Now they are sprinkling the flowers with great waves of milk. (*pushes Kṛṣṇa with his hand*) Dear friend, why are you so proud? By its very nature, the flute makes everyone mad with bliss. You are only its helper.

(*voice from the sky*)

The transcendental vibration of Kṛṣṇa's flute blocked the movements of the rain clouds, it made the Gandharvas shocked in wonder, and agitated the meditation of great saints like the four Kumāras. It amazed Lord Brahmā, confused Mahārāja Bali with an onslaught of curiosity, made Ananta Śeṣa, the holder of all the planets, whirl around, and pierced the layers of the universe.

Balarāma (*looking up, happily says to himself*): Why does Nārada Muni, reciting poetry and playing on his *vīṇā*, hide behind the clouds? (*indistinct sound again in the sky*)

Madhumāṅgala (*looking up, frightened*): Help, help! Let's run! Let's run away!

Śrīdāmā: Fool, what are you saying!

Madhumāṅgala (*frightened, looking upwards*): Eh, silly country boy, don't you see? Riding on a swan, and accompanied by a naked ghost grabbing many snakes, this four-headed *yakṣa* or *rākṣasa* now approaches us. (*looks again and trembles*) Led by that demon whose body is all covered with eyes, they will now attack us from the sky. These must be Kāmsa's servants. (*he hides, placing his head behind Kṛṣṇa*)

Kṛṣṇa (*aside*): Why do the kings of the directions, attracted by the sweetness of the flute-music, hide in the clouds? (*again plays the flute*)

³⁵⁵ The frightening female ending of the word *utsukābhiḥ* is matched in the second part of the verse with the female gender noun, *ghaṭā* 'multitude'. Madhumāṅgala manages to revert a disaster.

Madhumaṅgala (*looking up and sighing deeply*): These wicked demons are agitated, stunned, and frightened merely by the sound of my friend's flute. I am alive! O wicked rogues! Stop! Don't move! By cursing you or by striking you with my bow, I will crush your bald heads! (*shaking a stick, he jumps about*)

Balarāma (*smiling*): Friend, don't talk like that. These two persons are Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. On their left are Indra and the leaders of the demigods.

Madhumaṅgala: Of course! (*he sighs with relief*) I knew it all along. I was only joking. But you were afraid. Thinking that the demigods are *rākṣasas*, you wanted to escape.

Kṛṣṇa (*smiling*): O friend of the demigods, you see your own foolishness in others.

Balarāma: Look, look!

*aṣṭābhir śruti-putakair nava-vaiṇava-kākalīm kalayan
sata-dhṛtir api dhṛti-mukto marāla-prṣṭhe muhur luṭhati*

Hearing the sound of the flute with his eight ears, Lord Brahmā, the performer of one hundred *dhṛtis* (sacrifices), freed from his *dhṛti* (steadiness) rolls about on his swan.

(*again the sound of the vīṇā in the sky*)

*udite hari-vaktrendau veṇu-nāda-sudhā-muci
hanta rudra samudreṇa sva-maryādā vīlaṅghitā*

When the moon of the face of Hari rises, emitting the nectar of flute-music, then, alas, the ocean of Lord Śiva floods over the boundaries of composure.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes bored with entertaining the demigods, and He turns His attention to the beauty of the Vṛndāvana forest. His friend Madhumaṅgala, however, is less appreciative of the humming bees and flowering vines, his interest is in the delicious foods cooked by the Queen of Vraja. Encouraged by Kṛṣṇa, he prays to the flowering *kalpa-vṛkṣas* of Vṛndāvana for an instant satisfaction of his stomach. Immediately upon his fervent prayer, Paurṇamāsī appears with a plate of sweets, intimating to the boys that this is a gift from Mukharā, the grandmother of Rādhārāṇī, who was recently married to Abhimanyu. At the mention of Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa is visibly affected and consequently embarrassed, which is noticed by Balarāma and Paurṇamāsī. He tries to change the subject, but Paurṇamāsī persists and is not happy before she mentions Rādhā again.

Kṛṣṇa (*to Himself*): Ah! Why has destiny again brought Me news of Rādhā, she who enchants My heart?

Madhumaṅgala (*aside*): Why does He become so excited by the name Rādhā? (*openly*) Do not become so thirsty after this.

Kṛṣṇa (*with loving anger*): Talkative friend, shame on you. After what do I thirst?

Madhumaṅgala: Oh, don't be angry. I am only talking about these wonderful *manohārīs* [sweets, or the *gopīs*].

Kṛṣṇa: Friend, I misunderstood. But these aren't the *manohara laḍḍus*, these are the *mauktika laḍḍus*.

Madhumaṅgala (*laughing*): Friend, I would never try to fool You with a pun on the name of the star Rādhā. Why would I try to fool You? (*Kṛṣṇa is increasingly embarrassed*)

Paurṇamāsī (*aside*): Really, the naughty boy is teasing Kṛṣṇa. His heart overcome with love, He is now ashamed. All my desires are fulfilled. (*openly*) The star Rādhā moves in the firmament, the home of Lord Viṣṇu. How can anyone in the world of humans attain Her?

Kṛṣṇa (*at the use of the word Viṣṇu-pada, he gazes into the sky and smiles, then approaches Balarāma*): Noble brother, it is already late afternoon. Please take the cows to the bank of the Yamunā, and let them satisfy their thirst. Please enjoy these delicious *laḍḍu* sweets. I will rest for a moment with my dear friends Śrīdāma and Subala.

In the intimate company of His close friends, Kṛṣṇa continues to muse on the topic of Rādhā. He asks Śrīdāmā, "Dear friend, have you ever seen Her, this most beautiful girl in the universe?" Śrīdāmā only smiles and lowers his head in embarrassment. Subala clarifies, "Friend, how can You ask whether he has seen Her? She is his sister."

In another part of the Vṛndāvaṇa forest, Rādhā and Lalitā come close to a banyan tree, and Lalitā introduces it as 'the famous tree where Kṛṣṇa enjoys His pastimes'. Rādhā, excited, pretends She did not hear well. "Friend, whom did you say?" Lalitā smiles knowingly, enjoying the repetition as much as Rādhā, "I said Kṛṣṇa."

Right then the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute enters the ears of the two friends. Rādhā is overcome with emotion, and Lalitā scientifically observes how 'the delicate doe falls into the trap of the hunter'.

eṣa sthairya-bhujāṅga-saṅgha-damanāsaṅge vihaṅgeśvaro
vṛīḍā-vyādhi-dhurā-vidhūnana-vidhau tanv-aṅgi dhanvantariḥ
sādhvī-garva-bharāmbhu-rāśi-culukārambhe tu kumbhodbhavaḥ
kālindī-taṭa-maṇḍaliṣu muralī-tuṇḍād dhvanir dhāvatī

O slender girl, on the plains near the Yamunā, a sound escapes from the mouth of the flute which is like Garuḍa, defeating the snakes of the *gopīs'* peace, like Dhanvantari who violently destroys the disease of the *gopīs'* shyness, and like Agastya Ṛṣi who quickly drinks up the great ocean of the saintly *gopīs'* pride.

Rādhā admits that She is utterly affected, and cannot hide it in front of Viśākhā, who arrives with a picture of Kṛṣṇa in her hands. When Rādhā swears that she is unable to free Herself from this new, extraordinary kind of suffering, Viśākhā offers: "Rādhā, in my hand is the cure for Your suffering." They proceed into a shaded courtyard, full of *karṇikāra* blossoms, to take a look. This concludes the first act.

9. 2. 2. The First Meeting of Rādhā and Mādhava

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī uses the second and the third acts as a gradual development of the mutual attraction of the Divine couple, which attains its climax in Their first meeting. The two acts are full of tender verses, brimming with delicate sentiments and anguish of the two heroes, tossed about in Their own drama.

The second act opens with the loud wailings of Mukharā, who claims that Rādhā has become possessed with spirits.

Paurṇamāsī: Mukharā, why do you think Rādhā suffers from an incurable illness?

Mukharā: Noble lady, please listen.

*agre vīkṣya śikhaṇḍa-khaṇḍam acirād utkampam ālambate
guṇjānām ca vilokanān muhur asau sāśraṁ parikrośati
no jāne janayann apūṛva-naṭana-kṛidā-camatkāritām
bālāyāḥ kila citta-bhūmim aviśat ko 'yaṁ navīna-grahaḥ*

Upon seeing peacock feathers in front of Her, this girl suddenly begins trembling. When She sometimes sees a necklace of *guṇja* berries, She sheds tears and cries loudly. I do not know what kind of a planet has now began influencing the young girl, making Her dance in wondrous ways never seen before. (VM, 2. 15)

Paurṇamāsī (*aside*): This is the passion of intense love. (*openly*) Mukharā, I understand this very well. Kāṁsa and the other demons are searching for Rādhā. They made a ghost enter her.

Mukharā: Noble lady, what is the remedy?

Paurṇamāsī: The remedy is a glimpse of Kṛṣṇa, the sworn enemy of the demons.

Mukharā: Noble lady, but this will not please the crooked Jaṭilā.

Paurṇamāsī: Mukharā, you should pacify her with my words: 'By my yogic powers, I will create an apparition of Lord Kṛṣṇa.'

In another scene, Rādhā, tortured after She has seen the beautiful portrait of Kṛṣṇa painted by Viśākhā, is interrogated by Her close friends.

Rādhā (*agitated, to Herself*): O heart, simply by looking at this picture you have been overcome with love.

Lalitā and Viśākhā: Rādhā, we see how You suffer. Why will You not tell us the truth? (*Rādhā sighs and turns away*)

Viśākhā (*approaching her*):

cintā-santatir adya kṛntati sakhi svāntasya kiṁ te dhṛtiṁ
kiṁ vā siñcasi tāmram ambaram ati-svedāmbhasām ḍambaram
kampas campaka-gauri lumpati vapuḥ-sthairyaṁ katham vā balāt
tathyaṁ brūhi na maṅgalā parijane saṅgopanāṅgi-kṛtiḥ

O friend, why do these sufferings cut to pieces the steadiness in Your heart? Why do You sprinkle Your red garments with an abundant flood of perspiration? O girl, fair like the golden *campaka* flower, why does this strong trembling now break the firmness of Your body? Please tell us the truth. It is not auspicious to hide the truth from Your friends. (VM, 2. 2)

Rādhā (*indignant*): Cruel Viśākhā, are you not ashamed to question Me in this way?

Viśākhā (*worried*): Perhaps I once offended You, but I do not remember it.

Rādhā: Merciless girl, why do you talk like that? Remember and look.

Viśākhā: Even with great effort, I still do not remember.

Rādhikā: Crazy girl, you threw Me into the lake of eternal burning fire!

Viśākhā: How is that?

Rādhā (*with impatient anger*): Crooked liar, friend of the snake in this picture! Just wait! Just wait! (*overwhelmed, She recites in Sanskrit*)

vitanvānas tanvā marakata-rucīnām ruciratām
paṭān niṣkrānto 'bhūd dhṛta-sikhi-sikhaṇḍo nava-yuvā

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

Splendid like sapphires and decorated with peacock feathers, a youthful boy stepped out of that picture. (*after half of the verse, Her voice breaks, and She is stunned. Her two friends look at each other with raised eyebrows*)

*bhruvaṁ tena kṣiptvā kim api hasatonmāḍita-mateḥ
śaśi vṛtto vahnīḥ param ahaha vahnir mama śaśi*

When He smiled and lifted His eyebrows, My heart became mad. Alas! The moon acts like fire for Me, and fire has become like the moon.

Lalitā: Did this happen in a dream?

Rādhā: Was it a strange course of a dream, or was I awake? Was it night, or was it day? I do not know. The dark light of that moonlike boy has greatly excited Me. Many intense emotions in My heart have changed Me, and made Me unable to understand it.

Rādhā curses Herself for having become attracted to three persons simultaneously, but the two *sakhīs* happily console Her that the person with the name Kṛṣṇa, the player of the mischievous flute, and the person painted in the picture are the same.

Lalitā and Viśākhā (*joyfully*): How can beautiful girls of Gokula like You ever turn away from Śrī Kṛṣṇa and become attracted to anyone else? Listen. The three persons are all one. They are all the hero Kanhaiyā.

Rādhā (*breathes a sigh of relief and says to Herself*): Heart, be peaceful, be peaceful. The person you long to attain is the shelter of all beings and all the worlds.

In the next scene, Nāndīmukhī enters and attempts to discern any visible signs of love in Rādhā. Lalitā tries to protect Rādhā, saying that Her trembling and horripilation are caused by the cold southern wind. Nāndīmukhī is not so quickly convinced, she asks the *sakhīs* how is it that all of them are not trembling due to the cold wind, why in the world only Rādhā. Her diagnose is correct: "O girl, I think You have met the Cupid of the Vṛndāvana forest." Nāndīmukhī later discusses this amazing love with Paurṇamāsī, who teaches her granddaughter about the most astonishing nature of *prema* between Rādhā and Mādhava.

Paurṇamāsī (*whispers to Nāndīmukhī*): Nāndīmukhī, her heart is tossed by waves of deep love. Know that this is the wonderful and inconceivable power of the Hero of Love. Just see how wonderful it is! Great sages meditate upon Kṛṣṇa after withdrawing their mind from material objects. This girl, on the other hand, desperately tries to focus on material objects, and wants to withdraw Her mind from Him! Look! The sages long for a moment of His vision, while this bewildered girl desires to chase Him out of Her heart!

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF THE HISTORY OF ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE

Nāndīmukhī: Noble lady, love of this kind bewilders me.

Paurṇamāsī: Child, what you say is true. This deep, ecstatic love is very difficult to attain. Listen.

*pīḍābhir nava-kāla-kūṭa-kaṭutā-garvasya nirvāsano
nisyandena mudāṁ sudhā-madhurimāhaṅkāra-saṅkocanaḥ
premā sundari nanda-nandana-para jāgarti yasyāntare
jñāyante sphuṭam asya vakra-madhurās tenaiva vikrāntayaḥ*

My dear beautiful girl, if pure love (*prema*) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa awakens in someone's heart, all the crooked and the sweet effects of this love manifest in him. The pain of this love defeats the pride of the bitterness of fresh *kāla-kūṭa* poison, and the joys of this love embarrass the haughtiness of the sweetness of flowing nectar. (VM, 2. 18)

Trying to help Rādhā in attaining Her Lord, Paurṇamāsī advises Her to write a letter for Him, which the two *sakhīs* can carry to Him. The next scene introduces Śrī Kṛṣṇa, lost in thoughts of Rādhā, and Madhumaṅgala, who returns from his errand of bringing a *raṅgana-mālā*³⁵⁶ for Kṛṣṇa.

Madhumaṅgala: You do not know that the peacock feather has fallen from Your head. You do not see that You have lost Your garland. O youthful elephant playing in the groves of the Vṛndāvana forest, all this is caused by the great power of the two bumblebee eyes of Rādhā.

Annoyed at having been exposed, Kṛṣṇa unwillingly admits, "My dear friend, what a wonderful thing it is that since I have seen the beautiful lotus eyes of Śrī Rādhā, I have developed a tendency to spit at the supposed beauty of the moon and the lotus."

Lalitā and Viśākhā then enter, with a letter written by Rādhikā, on a petal of a *karṇikāra* flower. Madhumaṅgala is disappointed with a mere flower petal, and suggests that next time the girls could perhaps add some sugar candy to the dry petal. Kṛṣṇa, however, is excited beyond all limits, and tries to stay composed while Madhumaṅgala reads the verse written on the leaf, twice, to comprehend it better:

*O dearly beautiful, the artistic loveliness of Your picture
is now residing within the temple of My heart.
Bewildered, whichever direction I turn to,
Trying to flee, I find that You are there to stop Me.*

Kṛṣṇa pretends He is not interested in the contents of the letter, and with Madhumaṅgala they loudly make plans of disclosing the naughtiness of the *gopīs* to

³⁵⁶ A garland of small reddish flowers.

the elders. Kṛṣṇa argues that since the two of Them have never really met, there can be no interest on His part for Rādhā, and She is also probably excited with love for some other boy. Viśākhā swears that He is the one who is meant in the letter, and praises His extraordinary power of lifting the Govardhana Hill. Madhumaṅgala jumps up, assertively claiming that the Hill was held up by the sticks of so many cowherd men. Kṛṣṇa continues with His show of indifference, blaming it on Madhumaṅgala who does not tolerate departures from the path of *dharma*, and on Śrīdāmā who spies out His faults day and night. All these seemingly careless jokes finally make Lalitā cry in disappointment:

*antaḥ-kleśa-kalaṅkitāḥ kila vayaṁ yāmo 'dya yāmyaṁ purīm
nāyaṁ vañcana-sañcaya-praṇayinaṁ hāsaṁ tathāpy ujjhati
asmin samputite gabhīra-kapaṭair ābhīra-pallī-viṭe
hā medhāvinī rādhike tava katham premā garīyān abhūt*

Our hearts are so polluted by our miseries that we are certainly on our way to hell. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa does not stop His beautiful loving smiling, full of His cheating tricks. O intelligent Rādhikā, how could Your love for this rascal cowherd, who is deceiving You, become so great? (LM, 2. 37)

As a last recourse, Viśākhā gives Kṛṣṇa a *guñja* necklace previously worn by Rādhā, to see His reaction. He pretends to be angry, and exclaims that He does not wish to wear a necklace of hard, unripe *guñja* berries. But in His confusion, He takes His *raṅgana* garland off His neck, and gives it to the delighted Viśākhā. Lalita concludes, "O friend Viśākhā, we have now seen the unflinching celibacy of the snake who loves hundreds of *gopīs*. He is not a suitable match for our Rādhā. Let us inform Her."

As the two girls exit, Madhumaṅgala chides Kṛṣṇa for His indifference, and they become afraid that He has committed a big blunder in hiding His love. Both run to find roses for the ink, to write a charming letter to Rādhā.

In the meantime Viśākhā tries to console Rādhā who is intent on drowning Herself in the Kāliya lake. They walk to the bushes of roses at the side of the Yamunā, and both cry. Madhumaṅgala and Kṛṣṇa, in search of the roses for the ink, happen to come by. Hiding to overhear Rādhā's expressions of love and dejection, Kṛṣṇa cries. Just as Rādhā, in final despair, decides to take a last look at the picture of Kṛṣṇa, Viśākhā has to disappoint Her that the picture is presently unavailable. Rādhā closes Her eyes and meditates on Kṛṣṇa's form, and, seeing the favorable development of events, Kṛṣṇa and Madhumaṅgala jump out of the rose bushes right in front of the two *sakhīs*.

Viśākhā jubilantly urges Rādhikā to open Her eyes, as the meditation has borne a most amazing fruit right in front of them. Rādhā is deeply touched by the sight of Her beloved. They drink in each other's beauty, and Kṛṣṇa jokingly accuses Viśākhā of having stolen His *raṅgana* garland. The smart Madhumaṅgala notices the same

garland around Rādhā's neck, and suggests to Kṛṣṇa to take it from there. The merry joking is cut short by the appearance of Jaṭilā, who is looking around for the girls to take them to the Sūrya temple for *pūjā*. Both sides are annoyed, and Jaṭilā is upset to see her daughter-in-law close to the charming Kṛṣṇa. She warns Him to not cast crooked glances at the young girls, and Madhumaṅgala protests, telling the old lady to rather take care of her own squinting eyes. They all poke fun at Jaṭilā, speaking way over her head in double meanings, which, as much as they sound stupid to her, she seriously tries to comprehend. The old lady, confused, guesses that the Kṛṣṇa she has just seen must be the apparition created by Paurṇamāsī's yogic powers, and she admits to herself that the sight of this apparition is indeed curative, for Rādhā seems greatly improved. She then takes the girls with her to perform Sūrya-*pūjā*.

In the third act, Rūpa Gosvāmī celebrates the actual meeting of the Divine couple. In the first scene we meet Paurṇamāsī, regretful that she has been delaying the meeting of the two lovers. Madhumaṅgala matter-of-factly discloses to her that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is so obsessed with Rādhārāṇī that He does not even know where He lost His crown, buffalo horn, stick and other personal items. Paurṇamāsī half-seriously praises Kṛṣṇa for the amazing ability of His flute to slacken the dresses of the *gopīs* even when they are at home. Things only turn for the worse when Madhumaṅgala proceeds to tell the old lady that Kṛṣṇa is capable of much more, and that she has really missed the fun of seeing Him steal the dresses of the *gopīs* on the bank of the Yamunā and throwing them over His shoulder.

Lalitā who accompanies Paurṇamāsī cannot bear the words of praise heaped up by the eager Madhumaṅgala, and she disdainfully disagrees with the assertion of Madhumaṅgala that Kṛṣṇa's nature is soft and cooling. When she retorts that He makes all the girls of Vraja burn in fire, Madhumaṅgala touches Kṛṣṇa's chest to see whether it is cold or hot. He is forced to admit that obviously the hot-natured Rādhā is residing in His heart, which was cool before, but is now burning. Lalitā bitterly asks just how her friend Rādhā, softened by love, could ever enter the diamond-hard heart of Kṛṣṇa. Madhumaṅgala is upset and reveals that Kṛṣṇa does not even sleep at night, but thinks of Her constantly. Lalitā is finally slightly consoled, while Kṛṣṇa makes a show of reprimanding 'the lying fool'.

Paurṇamāsī breaks Kṛṣṇa's shy resistance and tells Him to stay in the mango grove, until the girls arrange everything necessary. Embarrassed and happy, He agrees. Paurṇamāsī finds Rādhā in the company of Viśākhā, pining for Her lover. The old lady desires to see the depth of Her love, and she makes a stern speech about Kṛṣṇa's supreme, unattainable position. Rādhā loses ground, becomes hopeless and ashamed of Her boldness, begging in a choked voice for the last blessing of becoming a bumblebee attracted to Kṛṣṇa's flower garland. Viśākhā becomes alarmed at seeing the state of her friend, and Paurṇamāsī quickly apologizes that she was only testing Her.

*amita-vibhavā yasya prekṣā-lavāya bhavādayo
bhuvana-guravo 'py utkaṇṭhābhis tapāmsi vitanvate*

*ahaha gahanās dṛṣṭānām te phalaṁ kim abhiṣṭuve
sutanu sa tanur jajñe kṛṣṇas tavekṣaṇa-tṛṣṇayā*

Yearning for a moment's glimpse of You, Śiva and the other limitlessly powerful masters of the worlds perform severe austerities. Ah! How can I properly praise the results of Your past pious deeds? O beautiful slender girl, thirsting to see You, Lord Kṛṣṇa has become withered and pale. (VM, 3. 17)

After all these shocks, Rādhā hardly recovers and is unable to believe Her ears. Accompanied with Lalitā, She departs for a forest grove, while Viśākhā runs back to the mango tree to inform Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She decides to trick Him with news about Rādhā's departure to Mathurā, with her face downcast, crying dry tears. Lord Kṛṣṇa is upset to such a degree that Viśākhā cannot afford to deceive Him for long. Relieved, He asks about the condition of His dearest Rādhā, and Viśākhā describes Her anguish.

*dūrād apy anuṣaṅgataḥ śruti-mite tvan-nāmādheyākṣare
sonmādaṁ madirekṣaṇā viruvati dhatte muhur vepathum
āḥ kiṁ vā kathanīyam anyad api te daivād varāmbhodare
dṛṣṭe taṁ parirabdhum utsuka-matiḥ pakṣa-dvayīm icchati*

When from far away the syllables of Your name touch Her ears, the beautiful-eyed lady becomes mad and She trembles again and again. If she happens to see a dark raincloud, Her heart yearns to embrace it, and she longs to have wings to fly. (VM, 3. 23)

Kṛṣṇa and Viśākhā hurry to the meeting bower, where Rādhā, worried due to the delay, nervously paces back and forth, looking at the shaded forest path again and again. Śrī Kṛṣṇa suddenly appears, greeting His beloved with the words, "It is the mercy of Paurṇamāsī that this moonlight now shines so brightly." Rādhā, hardly able to utter a word, is overwhelmed with emotion and faints. Viśākhā laments that while many fortunate *gopīs* are famous for delighting Kṛṣṇa with their sweet jokes, her own great misfortune is that her mistress, upon seeing the hero Kṛṣṇa, becomes stunned and rolls on the ground in front of Him. The two *sakhīs* forcibly drag Her to Kṛṣṇa, but the situation is again interrupted by Mukharā, who sends Kṛṣṇa home immediately. Not listening to her demands, Kṛṣṇa pretends to leave but secretly pulls at Rādhā's sari, and Mukharā screams about what she has just seen. Lalitā, knowing that the old lady is half blind in the dark, successfully convinces her that she only saw a branch of the *tamāla* tree, swinging in the wind and pulling at Rādhā's sari. Dizzy and tired, the old lady goes home to sleep.

9. 2. 3. The Two Groups of Gopīs

We now encounter the second element which, much like Jaṭilā and Mukharā, spices the Vraja-līlā. Two rival clans of gopī girls vie for the attention of Kṛṣṇa towards their own heroine. The Supreme Goddess Rādhikā, the independent and proud mistress, has a milder counterpart in the meek, soft Candrāvalī, wife of the cowherd Govardhana. Over the canvass of Candrāvalī's mellow love, the jealous anger of Rādhārāṇī is painted like streaks of deep, intense colors. To please both is almost impossible even for the Supreme Lord Himself.

The fourth, fifth and sixth acts introduce the serious competition of the two groups for Kṛṣṇa's love. While Śrī Kṛṣṇa was attracted to the lotus face of Śrī Rādhā, the opposing camp noticed His absence around Govardhana, close to the home of Candrāvalī. Her attendant, Padmā, has finally secured an assurance from Nāndīmukhī that Kṛṣṇa is recently moving around the area of Govardhana, propelled by a remembrance of Candrāvalī.

Kṛṣṇa and Subala, after solidifying their strategy, approach Candrāvalī, who, despite harboring a deep grudge against the fickle boy, is still forced to admit that the sound of His flute, the *durmukhī muralī*, is always astonishing to her. As she chastises Kṛṣṇa about His thirst for ever new loving relationships, He counters that it is She who is ever new. In a flattering verse meant to pacify her, He sings about His own suffering in separation from her, and that His only recourse was the cooling ... Rādhā. He quickly corrects Himself, "I meant *dhārā, dhārā*, a stream of cooling water!" But the damage has been done, and Candrāvalī is hardly able to hide disappointment. "Go serve Your Rādhā."

As she gallantly speaks soft words with concealed anger, she begs for permission to leave, and Kṛṣṇa and Subala remain behind, wondering what to do. Subala couldn't care less about this second love, while Kṛṣṇa bothers Himself with possible solutions, and admires Candrāvalī's humble nature. Subala is happier, however, when, in praising the wonderful *bakula* forest in front of them, Kṛṣṇa inadvertently mentions Rādhikā. Subala's quick suggestion that the forest would indeed be beautiful in the presence of Rādhā is met with immediate approval, and Subala is sent to Lalitā to arrange for the meeting.

In the meantime, Madhumaṅgala and Padmā enter, trying to find a way for Kṛṣṇa's truce with Candrāvalī, and when they find Him reciting verses in praise of Rādhā, they mistake them for a glorification of Candrāvalī. Convinced of His love for Candrāvalī, Madhumaṅgala offers to 'bring His love', and Kṛṣṇa happily sends him off, excited at the prospect of meeting Rādhā. Madhumaṅgala appears with Candrāvalī, boastful that only he was able to break her sulks. It is almost too late when, hearing the girl's anklets, Kṛṣṇa runs to her side, thinking she is Rādhā, and, enraptured, begins a verse on the glory of Rādhā. Madhumaṅgala quickly saves Him by finishing the verse so that it refers to Candrāvalī. Trapped with Candrāvalī due

to Madhumāṅgala's expert help, Kṛṣṇa moves away into another forest, to avoid meeting with Rādhā.

The *sakhīs* of Rādhā's camp are excited at the prospect of Her meeting with the Lord, and they accompany Her to a bower of *bakula* flowers in the forest of *kesara* trees, to wait for Him. Along with the *sakhīs*, She decorates the grove, but the moon is their only companion.

Towards the morning, Kṛṣṇa worriedly runs back to the *kesara* forest, and plans to pacify Rādhā that He misunderstood the place of the meeting. Having spent the night in the forest of *nāga-kesara* flowers, He has smartly picked a handful of them to have a solid proof in His hands. Seeing the apprehensive hero from a distance, the *sakhīs* sternly instruct Rādhā to be as hard as a golden statue. Kṛṣṇa approaches them, boasting about His sleepless night, and the girls cut Him short, observing that He ran into the bower accompanied with dawn and with the sound of the roosters.

He tries to lighten up the atmosphere with a mention of the *nāga-kesara* flowers that He has brought in a bundle of His dress. Wishing to decorate Rādhā with the fragrant flowers, He enthusiastically describes their amazing smell, which, He says, pervades His whole being due to having spent the night in the *nāga-kesara* bower. He approaches Rādhā to place the flowers in the spread edge of Her sari. Bewildered by Her glance, He does not notice that His flute also slips into the sari, along with the flowers.

Rādhā teases Him that not the flowers, but the smell of *Candrāvalī* pervades His being, and when He simply agrees, the *sakhīs* are furious. He innocently asks why they are so upset when He used the word *candrāvalī* in the sense of camphor.

All would perhaps go well if Madhumāṅgala would not intrude into this difficult confrontation with Rādhā. He enters the scene, having come to console Rādhā in Her lonely vigil: "It is right that You rebuke us. You must have remained awake thinking the stray sounds in the woods come from the wild animals. Now You see that there are no wild animals in this forest, only my friend Kṛṣṇa. Now You can peacefully go home and sleep." Her disappointment takes a form of a verse.

*When I cannot see the moonlight of Kṛṣṇa's toenails (a row of moons – candrāvalī),
I become overwhelmed by the rising of the ordinary moon, and become full of despair.*

Judging from her verse that Rādhā seems to know about it anyway, Madhumāṅgala tries to pacify Her by admitting his friends's waywardness.

*klantena te vadana-candram anakalayya
kalyāṇi gokula-purandara-nandanena
candrāvalī ...*

Not seeing You, the prince of Gokula became filled with despair. Then, *Candrāvalī* ...

(Kṛṣṇa signals him to stop, knitting His eyebrows. Struck with wonder, everyone gazes at each other)

Madhumaṅgala (*aside*): Alas! A reckless *brāhmaṇa* boy as I am, I have made a mistake!

Kṛṣṇa (*reflecting*): This boy is now choked up with tears due to the trouble He has made for Me. I have to complete the verse. (*smiling*)

*candrāvalīna-nayanāntatayā kilāśya
sā dṛśyataḥ katham api kṣapitā kṣapeyam*

Madhumaṅgala meant to say: Somehow or other the night passed, as the corner of Kṛṣṇa's eyes was submerged in the moonlight (*candra-avalīna*).

The *sakhīs*, not trusting the duet who sings verses to them, angrily notice signs of Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment with Candrāvalī on Him. Hurt at being derided and exposed, Kṛṣṇa begs Rādhā to not criticize Him. She sighs, declaring that She has no intention to find fault with Him, when She is preoccupied with Her own cruel destiny. Even though He tries to pacify Her in numerous ways, smudging His peacock-feather crown in the dust at Her feet, Rādhā remains adamant.

In the midst of this drama, Mukharā enters. Madhumaṅgala compares the loud shallow lady to Kṛṣṇa's flute, and Kṛṣṇa finally notices His flute is missing. While Madhumaṅgala would rather run away empty-handed and save his life, Kṛṣṇa is determined to first find the flute. As he bickers with the girls, Mukharā becomes impatient and reprimands Kṛṣṇa for teasing her granddaughter, who is a respectable young married lady. When Madhumaṅgala swears on his *brāhmaṇa* thread that he has just seen Kṛṣṇa bowing down in front of Rādhā, Mukharā is elated, commenting that He must have earned quite some *puṇya* with this act. Everyone smiles. The fourth act concludes with Kṛṣṇa's reminiscences of the cloud of Rādhā's jealous anger, through which the sun of Her loving glances occasionally breaks through.

The fifth act describes the combined efforts of Kṛṣṇa, Vṛndā, Subala and Nāndimukhī to break Rādhā's *māna*, and to convince Lalitā, the chief cause for Rādhā's stubbornness, that Kṛṣṇa was not at fault. Paurṇamāsī in the meantime hears of the difficulty brought about by Abhimanyu, who, suspecting Rādhā's relation to Kṛṣṇa, wished to move his family to Mathurā.

Rādhā, in her solitary lament, regrets that She did not forgive Kṛṣṇa, and in Her half-mad state She imagines that She is in His company. Her dreaming is broken by Lalitā, and She becomes even further depressed when Viśākhā arrives with a strange letter. The message was given to Subala by Vṛndā, and it seems to suggest that due to Rādhā's incurable anger, Kṛṣṇa is now having fun elsewhere. Rādhā blames Her own faulty character, and in Her despair, She is finally consoled by Nāndimukhī:

kṣaṇam api na suhṛdbhir narma-goṣṭhīm vidhatte

*racayati na ca cūḍāṁ campakānāṁ cayena
param iha mura-vairī yogi-van mukta-bhogas
tava sakhi mukha-candraṁ cintayan nirvṛṇoti*

He does not stay even for a moment in the company of His friends to joke with them, and He has given up fashioning crowns from *campaka* flowers. Even more, like a *yogī* free from all enjoyments, He meditates on Your moonlike face, O friend, and experiences bliss. (VM, 5. 14)

When a sound from the sky announces that Kṛṣṇa no longer lures the *gopīs* to the forest because He has lost His flute, Rādhā remembers that the flute is in Her possession. The *sakhīs* wish to test the flute's amazing powers, and, having heard that the mystic flute plays by itself when held against the wind, they make it play. Jaṭilā is immediately there, snatching the flute from Rādhā, and running on to the cottage of Paurṇamāsī to inform her of the scandal.

Subala intercepts her, frightening her that an old monkey is about to steal yogurt from her home, and Jaṭilā instantly changes the direction of her running, turning home instead. Seeing the monkey who was actually sent there by Vṛndā, she throws the flute at him to protect her yogurt.

Everyone rejoices to hear the news that the monkey took the flute and climbed up into a *kadamba* tree. Jaṭilā asks for Subala's help in securing the flute, and in the meantime Mukharā claims Rādhā, who should immediately accompany her husband in the worship of Gomaṅgalā-devī. Vṛndā gets the flute back from the monkey and with Subala they hurry to Kṛṣṇa to return the flute to Him. Since Rādhā was detained by superiors, Vṛndā suggests to Subala that the two of them should dress up like Rādhā and Lalitā, to console Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Rādhā's momentary absence. In the meantime, Paurṇamāsī worries about the insinuations of the old Jaṭilā.

Kṛṣṇa eagerly waits for Rādhā in the company of Madhumaṅgala. Finally, they spot the two girls, who are actually Subala and Vṛndā, dressed as Rādhā and Lalitā. The happy boys notice a flute in Rādhā's hands. Kṛṣṇa eloquently admires the beauty of Rādhā:

*vidhur eti divā nirūpatāṁ śata-patram bata śarvarī-mukhe
iti kena sadā śriyojjvalam tulanāṁ arhati mat-priyānanam*

The brilliance of the moon disappears during the day, and the lotus closes at night. But the face of My beloved always shines so beautifully. What can it be compared to? (VM, 5. 20)

A young girl sent by Mukharā interrupts them, accusing Kṛṣṇa of lying that Rādhā has stolen His flute, when the flute was clearly seen in the hands of the old monkey. Subala and Vṛndā hide and impersonate the voices of Rādhā and Lalitā, to entice the young girl in bringing Jaṭilā on the scene. Still hiding from Madhumaṅgala and Kṛṣṇa, Vṛndā impersonating Lalitā recites a verse, instructing Rādhā to throw the

flute far away. Subala in the dress of Rādhā appears, and, from under his sari, pulls out the flute and throws it towards Kṛṣṇa. Madhumaṅgala grabs it, and, sure enough, Jaṭilā already speeds into the scene. Grabbing Subala and Vṛndā, she disappears.

Madhumaṅgala helplessly follows her to see what happens, and returns full of praise for the mystic powers of Rādhā. He reports to his master, "Loudly condemning Rādhā, Jaṭilā grabbed Her by the hand and took her into an assembly of elderly *gopīs*, placing Her right in front of Paurṇamāsī. Then, pulling off Rādhā's veil, she was shocked to see a laughing Subala. As the laughter in the assembly subsided, the elderly affectionate *gopīs* became angry at Jaṭilā, and she quickly escaped." Kṛṣṇa, jubilant, is eager to know what happened to the second girl. Madhumaṅgala explains, "Subala dressed as Rādhā chanted a *mantra* into Lalitā's ear and she became Vṛndā on the spot."

Kṛṣṇa now understands that this was Vṛndā's plan all along, and becomes eager to see the two of them in their costumes. However, the real Rādhā and Lalitā come by, burned by separation from Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa knowingly approaches Rādhā, mistaking Her for Subala, and jokingly asks to be embraced. Rādhā and Lalitā are surprised at His direct advances, and quickly understand what is going on. When the real Vṛndā appears next to them, completely confusing Madhumaṅgala with her two different forms, Kṛṣṇa is delighted to know that He is close to the real Rādhā. Vṛndā, the goddess of the forest, orchestrates the blossoming of all kinds of flowers, and presents a humorous quarrel of two of her parrots, who fight about the supremacy of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

The act ends in another disturbance by Jaṭilā who has forgotten her stick and comes back to fetch it. Again, she spies Rādhā close to Kṛṣṇa, and Rādhā apprehensively begins to flee. But the old Jaṭilā has now seen through all the tricks of the young cowherds: "O Subala, why do you keep dressing as a woman?" Kṛṣṇa swears that this is really Rādhā, but the old lady does not waver. "O rascal fool," she retorts, "I know everything!"

We are skipping the next act, describing the intimate pastimes of the Divine couple in the season of autumn. Offering our *praṇāmas* to the contents of the sixth act from a safe distance, let us proceed to the seventh.

9. 2. 4. Pastimes at Gaurī-tīrtha

In the concluding act of the drama, we meet with Paurṇamāsī, whose blessings Abhimanyu, the husband of Rādhā, has come to plead for. He intends to leave for Mathurā, to end the embarrassing gossip about his wife and Kṛṣṇa. Paurṇamāsī, using her elderly stature to the advantage of the *lilā*, orders him to at least find out and get some real proofs before misjudging his wife. When she blesses him for his obedience, "May you be blessed with many cows!", Abhimanyu remembers that his mother

always impresses upon him that the cowherd Govardhana, the husband of Candrāvalī, has become a master of many cows simply because of the worship of Caṇḍī performed by his wife. He begs Paurṇamāsī to allow Rādhā to perform the same type of worship, and she readily agrees, predicting that Rādhā will soon be initiated into the most auspicious kind of worship.

After Abhimanyu departs, Vṛndā approaches the elderly Paurṇamāsī, to inform her of a recent command by Śrī Kṛṣṇa: “Dear Vṛndā, please prepare the Gaurī-tīrtha where I wish to spend the *saubhāgya-pūrṇimā*, with the lady who is decorated with a garland of lotuses and a play-lotus in Her hand³⁵⁷”. A popular saying goes that the fortune of a lady adorned on this day by her beloved will greatly increase. When a parrot recites this order of Kṛṣṇa in the assembly of the *gopīs*, Padmā, although knowing it speaks of Rādhā, boldly boasts that it refers to her mistress Candrāvalī.

The companions of Rādhā are momentarily discouraged when they see a garland, carefully woven by Rādhā, beautifying the braid of Padmā. Vṛndā informs the girls, however, that Padmā stole the garland from Kṛṣṇa when He was bathing in the Yamunā, leaving the garland on the branch of a *kadamba* tree. When Viśākhā joins them with happy news of Candrāvalī being summoned home to her husband’s side, they are assured of their success on this decisive day.

In the meantime, the confidantes of Candrāvalī fight with despondency, feeling obliged to return to Candrāvalī’s home on the order of her grandmother Karālā. The old lady said, “Immediately take Candrāvalī to Govardhana’s side”, but Padmā excitedly thinks of a solution. Gaurī-tīrtha is near the Govardhana Hill, and the girls plan to pretend that they misunderstood the order, disobeying to take her home to her husband.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, eager to meet with Rādhā at Gaurī-tīrtha, happens upon Candrāvalī and her friends. Although not happy, He reasons to Himself that since Candrāvalī’s love is sincere, He should take the time to please her. To avoid meeting Rādhā who is expected to arrive, He moves with Candrāvalī to the nearby Saṅkarṣaṇa-kuṇḍa. Meeting with Lalitā and Vṛndā, they exchange a row of verses with double meanings, wherefrom the friends of Rādhā try to decipher the state of Kṛṣṇa’s heart.

Kṛṣṇa: O friend, you give a great festival of happiness to Padmā. You are always faultless, and you are filled with happiness to remain at Kṛṣṇa’s side. O Candrāvalī, you are wonderful. (*looking ahead*) O doe-eyed girl, look at the beauty of the forest.

Padmā: Ah! Here is Kṛṣṇa’s pet deer, whose name is Surāṅga. And his wife is the doe named Raṅginī.

Kṛṣṇa (*listens apprehensively, says to Himself*): Soft sounds from the throat of Raṅginī make Me wonder whether Rādhā has come?

³⁵⁷ The phrase ‘holding a play-lotus in Her hand’ (in Sanskrit *padmāvalambī-karā*) can unfortunately also mean ‘holding the hand of Padmā’, i.e. Candrāvalī.

Padmā: Why is Surāṅga suddenly running to the south?

Kṛṣṇa (to Himself): Attracted by the sound of Rāṅginī's voice, the deer has now gone to Gaurī-tīrtha. I shall wait here at Saṅkarṣaṇa-kuṇḍa for a while.

Padmā: Filled with thousands of new lotus flowers, and nectarean waves that can wash away all sins, this beautiful lake appears like a great herd of cows.

Kṛṣṇa: Beloved, look, look!

*mitre vicitram anurāga-bharaṁ vahantī
saṁvardhitāli-nikarā sva-rasodayena
sat-karṇikojjala-rucir bhuvane samantāl
lakṣmīm tanoti bhavatīva sarojinīyam*

Bearing a burden of love for the sun, and delighting the swarms of bumblebees with the oozing nectar, this lotus flower, similar to you, with a shining whorl now spreads its beauty across the lake. (VM, 7. 13)³⁵⁸

Śaibyā: Why does the moon (Kṛṣṇa) make this lotus (Candrāvalī) wilt?

Padmā (pointing to the moon, meaningfully): This fragrant lotus bears love in its heart for the sun. O moon who is red for only a moment, do not cast your moonlight upon this lotus.³⁵⁹

Kṛṣṇa: O Padmā, the moon (Kṛṣṇa) is not at fault here. This lovely lotus (this lovely lady) grows pale because in the evening, she is abandoned by the fickle Lakṣmī, good fortune (or, she is abandoned by her friend Padmā).

Candrāvalī (smiling, she looks ahead):

*samada-madhupa-lauliyotsekam ālokya śaṅke
vihasati latikālī puṣpa-sobhā-bhareṇa
viṣṭjati makaranda-cchadmanā bāṣpa-bindūn
īyam ati-mṛdur ekā snehataḥ svarṇa-yūthī*

I think the creepers (the other gopīs) have noticed the excessive greed of the intoxicated bumblebee (Kṛṣṇa), and they are now laughing with the great beauty of

³⁵⁸ The verse could also mean: O lotuslike girl, bearing a great burden of love for your friend (mitra) Kṛṣṇa, and delighting your confidantes (ali) with the rasas you experience, you are beautifully decorated with splendid earrings (karṇika) and display your transcendental beauty (lakṣmī) throughout the entire world (bhuvana, which either means a pond or the world).

³⁵⁹ The alternative meaning is: This lovely woman bears love in her heart for her hero. O Lord of Rādhā, whose love for Candrāvalī lasts but a moment, do not place Your hand upon her.

their flowers. But this most delicate golden jasmine vine (Candrāvalī), on the pretext of dripping honey, now cries tears of love³⁶⁰. (VM, 7. 15)

Kṛṣṇa: Dear one, see this, see this.

*ayam ucca-śiraḥ kadamba-rājāḥ sphurad indindira-vṛnda-bandi-gītaḥ
surabhī-kula-puccha-cāmarālī- marudāvijita-vigrahaś cakāsti*

This is the regal *kadamba* tree, with its head held high, praised by the bards in the form of loud bumblebees, and worshipped by the whisks of the tails of the *surabhi* cows.³⁶¹ (VM, 7. 16)

Candrāvalī: Ah, how charming is the opulence of the Vṛndāvana forest!³⁶²

(*Lalitā and Vṛndā enter*)

Lalitā (*looking ahead, in agitation*): This is a great disaster.

Vṛndā: It is not easy to disregard Karālā's order. How then was Padmā able to bring Candrāvalī here?

Lalitā: Oh, you know all the mystic arts. Please pull Kṛṣṇa out of this situation.

Vṛndā:

*svasya prema-maṇīnām gaurava-bhājām iyaṁ varā yātrī
hariṇā parihaṇīyā katham nu candrāvalī bhavitā*

How can Candrāvalī, the best treasure of jewels of *prema*, full of respect for the Lord, be given up by Him? (VM, 7. 17)

Lalitā:

*yasyopalabhya gandham gaurava-kulam āśu cauravad bhramati
udbhaṭam anurāga-bhaṭam taṁ rañjita-nāgaram naumi*

I bow down to the powerful warrior, the passionate hero of Rādhā's pure love. A mere scent of this love makes Candrāvalī's respectful love flee like a thief. (VM, 7. 18)

³⁶⁰ This is a hidden accusation of Kṛṣṇa who has recently been favoring the camp of Rādhā, and a statement of self-praise about the unique level of Candrāvalī's love.

³⁶¹ The commentators explain this verse as an indirect pacification of Candrāvalī, suitable to her leanings towards *aśvarya*: 'I am like a regal *kadamba* tree', Kṛṣṇa is saying, 'worthy of everyone's worship, and yet I am present here with you to please you.'

³⁶² By using the word *lalita* 'charming', Candrāvalī unknowingly invites Lalitā on stage, who enters along with Vṛndā. The two of them observe Kṛṣṇa from a distance, despairing at the turn of events.

Despite their bold speech, looking at the scene in front of them, the two girls are despondent, not knowing how to achieve their objective. They approach the group of Kṛṣṇa and the friends of Candrāvalī, and wish to at least tease them, while anything else still seems painfully impossible.

Lalitā: O Candrāvalī! The deer Surāṅga ignores the love of his beloved, instead, he has become a lover of all the does. We should not allow the doe Raṅginī to stay in his house. I have come to you to bear witness that Surāṅga has not remembered his beloved for an entire month.

(Candrāvalī smiles)

Kṛṣṇa (to Himself): Lalitā has come to help Me. (glancing at Candrāvalī, He decides to play a trick, and openly says) Lalitā, you criticize Surāṅga unfairly. You do not know the actual desire within his heart. Please give this message to the doe Raṅginī:

*hariṇābhilaṣyamāṇā sārāṅga-ramaṇi sadā tvam atrāsi
tad amuṁ tvad-vaśa-hṛdayaṁ hṛdayaṁ-gama-locane viddhi*

O lover of the deer, the deer always desires you. O doe whose eyes penetrate the heart, please know that the heart of the deer is under your control.³⁶³ (VM, 7. 19)

Padmā (silently to Kṛṣṇa): O Kṛṣṇa, you have now attained Your beloved. Therefore it is now proper that You should abandon us, who are not worth Your company.

Kṛṣṇa:

*karavāṇi hanta divyaṁ divyāṅgi madonnatāsu gopīṣu
anurāgitāṁ sakhi dadhe rādhā-gandhiṣu na vāmāsu*

O extraordinary girl, My dear friend, I swear to you that I have no love for the stubborn gopīs bearing the scent of Rādhā, but instead love the proud friends of Candrāvalī.³⁶⁴ (VM, 7. 20)

Padmā (smiling proudly): Friend Lalitā, this is amazing. Amazing. Your nickname is Anurādhā because you always accompany Rādhā. Why are you alone today?

³⁶³ The verse plays with the meaning of the word *hari*, which can either indicate the deer Surāṅga, or Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa. The word *sārāṅga* can also be interpreted as either the deer or Kṛṣṇa (Kāmadeva).

³⁶⁴ The verse is ambiguous in many ways. It is meant to be a consolation for Candrāvalī that Kṛṣṇa loves her and not the gopīs of the group of Rādhā, and it should also console Lalitā that in fact, Kṛṣṇa loves only Rādhā. The adjectives piled together make it difficult for the girls to discern just which of them refer to their own clan and which to the opponents, and so the words *madonnata* and *vāma* can refer to both of the clans. Kṛṣṇa is either saying that he loves Candrāvalī and the rest of her gopīs who are presently proud to have Him in their power, or it may mean that He loves Rādhā, the queen of contrariness and pride, quite legitimately, since She is the receptacle of supreme love for Him.

Lalitā:

*rolambī-nikurambarṁ cumbati gaṇḍam pipāsayā tasya
sarati tṛṣṭārtaḥ sarasī sa karīndras taṁ punar na hi sā*

With great thirst the bumblebees kiss the cheeks of the king of elephants. But the elephant, not caring for the bumblebees, walks to the lake to appease his thirst. The lake does not walk to him.³⁶⁵ (VM, 7. 21)

When Lalitā and Vṛndā seem to be gaining ground in their praise of Rādhā, and even Kṛṣṇa ambiguously seems to be siding with them, Padmā angrily walks away and wants to drag Candrāvalī with her, away from this club of rascals, *dhūrta-goṣṭhī*. Kṛṣṇa blames Padmā for misleading His beloved Candrāvalī, and compares her to a *karālā* weed that prevents the jasmine creeper from climbing up the *tamāla* tree. The word *karālā* ominously predicts the intrusion of the old grandmother Karālā.

She is aghast to find the girls in the company of Kṛṣṇa, and attacks Kṛṣṇa and her granddaughter with wild accusations. Lalitā, however, humorously influences her, convincing her that the actual culprit is Candrāvalī's friend Padmā. Padmā angrily leaves in search of Jaṭilā, to revenge for Lalitā's joke, while Karālā drags away Candrāvalī and Śaibyā.

Alone with Vṛndā and Lalitā, Kṛṣṇa sighs and asks them if they are happy with the result. Vṛndā tells Him of Rādhā's presence at Gaurī-tīrtha, and finally the tide turns to the advantage of the group of Rādhikā. Kṛṣṇa approaches the grove of *mādhavī* creepers, suspecting Rādhā's presence from the closeness of the doe Raṅginī. Approaching Her from behind, He closes Her eyes with His trembling hand, and Rādhā lovingly hits Him with Her play-lotus. The humorous Kṛṣṇa decides to play a joke, and turns to Rādhā with the words, "My dear Candrā ..." Vṛndā, taking part in this game, casts a spell over the old monkey who screams, "O Mistress, because of Your mistake Lalitā will not be able to remain alive!" Rādhā connects the two events and is utterly dejected.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa merrily tries to appease Her, and is not even sad when He does not really succeed. Rādhārāṇī leaves, full of contempt and shame, leaving behind the two happy schemers, Kṛṣṇa and Vṛndā. Deciding that there is no point in pursuing the angry mistress, Kṛṣṇa plans to dress Himself as a beautiful golden-complexioned girl. Madhumaṅgala enters timely, remarking that Padmā has entrusted the paraphernalia for the worship of Gaurī to him. They rush to the temple of Gaurī, and Kṛṣṇa dresses up using the worship paraphernalia, asking Vṛndā to refer to Him as her sister.

Vṛndā spies the offended Rādhā in the company of Lalitā and Viśākhā, who bewail their defeat on the glorious *saubhāgya-pūrṇimā*. Vṛndā lures them back to the

³⁶⁵ The elephant represents Kṛṣṇa, kissed by the bumblebees who are the *gopīs* of Candrāvalī's clan. But the elephant, not caring for them, walks to the lake which is Rādhā. She does not need to come to Him.

company of Kṛṣṇa, who, she says, is now in the temple of Gaurī, talking to Nikuñja-vidyā. “Who in the world is Nikuñja-vidyā?” the girls are curious. Vṛndā matter-of-factly explains that she is her very famous sister, known to everyone in Vraja. The girls are anxious to meet her.

Arriving at the temple of Gaurī, Vṛndā tries to make Rādhā enter the temple, convincing her that only Nikuñja-vidyā is inside. The *sakhīs* are apprehensive, seeing Kṛṣṇa’s pet peacock Tāṇḍavika in the courtyard. Rādhā enters and soon realizes that the friendly girl is somewhat aggressive.

In the meantime, Padmā has disclosed to Jaṭilā that Rādhā is at Gaurī-tīrtha, and the elderly lady happily comes to bless her in the worship of Gaurī. She is greeted by Kṛṣṇa’s peacock, perching on the head of Gaurī’s lion. The bad omen makes her run back to the village, to quickly bring her son Abhimanyu.

When the two of them arrive back to the scene, they triumphantly peek into the temple, where Rādhā pretends to pray: “O Goddess, have mercy, have mercy.” Abhimanyu jumps in to catch the mischievous couple red-handed, and hearing his frightening voice, Rādhā falls down like a stick in front of the fair-complexioned Nikuñja-vidyā. Abhimanyu is confused, and with Jaṭilā they guess that the golden-hued lady is Gaurī, appearing in her actual form to bless Rādhā.

Kṛṣṇa is relieved, happy about His pastime of dressing as a lady, and He takes full advantage of the situation. Predicting a great calamity for Abhimanyu, he makes him avert it by promising to stay in Vraja, and always allowing his wife to worship Gaurī in the forest. Abhimanyu is all too ready to agree. The stern Goddess takes the opportunity to impress upon Abhimanyu that his chaste wife Rādhā is the source of all his good fortune, and that he should always keep faith in her. Abhimanyu humbly apologizes, blaming it on Subala who keeps dressing as a woman, making false scandals. As Abhimanyu and Jaṭilā humbly exit the scene, Paurṇamāsī comes to congratulate the golden-hued deity and to wholeheartedly bless the Lord of Vraja. Crying tears of love, she prays,

*antaḥ kandalitādarah śruti-puṭīm udghāṭayan sevate
yas te gokula-keli-nirmala-sudhā-sindhūttha-bindūn api
rādhā-mādhavikā-madho madhurimā-svārājyaṁ asyārjayan
sādhīyān bhavadīya-pāda-kamale premormir unmīlatu*

O Mādhava, Spring of the *mādhavikā* honey of Rādhā, those in whose hearts love for You has sprouted open their ears to serve the drops of the ocean of nectar of the pure pastimes at Gokula. Let them succeed in attaining the kingdom of Your sweetness, and let the waves of *prema* towards Your lotus feet manifest in their heart. (VM, 7. 62)

These benedictions of Paurṇamāsī bring the drama to a close. In the epilogue, Rūpa Gosvāmī prays to the saintly readers and spectators, urging them to carefully study the drama and increase its glory:

The peaceful, supremely advanced devotees of the Lord can make this composition meritorious through their saintly character, and can double its good qualities. They cool the dark sky of its faults with the stars of remembrance of Lord Viṣṇu's lotus feet. (*Vidagdha-mādhava*, Epilogue, verse 3)

Hopefully, after having followed the residents of Vraja through the humorous calamities premeditated by *Yogamāyā*, and through the peaks of emotional experiences warranted by their own astonishing levels of love for the Lord, the doubts about the lack of dramatic action in the devotional dramas are dispelled, and the *Vidagdha-mādhava* of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī emerges as a masterpiece alone in its own category. To devotees whose minds are sharply trained in *viveka*, in discriminating the worldly romance and the divine heights of transcendent emotion, any mundane drama seems just as tasteless and dry as the devotional dramas seem to those who have no qualification to melt in *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

To all those who have found the mere summary of the *Vidagdha-mādhava* too simplistic, and who could not satisfy their scholarly thirst with my writing, what could I possibly say? Words do not fail at the blessed sight of the highest perfection, they only become submissive to it. The simple and faithful appreciation of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, born of the special mercy of the Lord and His devotees, is by far superior to the dry argumentations about the subjective merits of drama or poetry. Once the heart becomes animated by the astonishing *hlādinī-śakti* of the Lord, it enters the abode of the Lord and shares the sweet-bitter fate with its dear idols, the *gopīs* of Vraja.

*vācā tṛtīya-jana-śaṅkaṭa-duḥsthayā kiṁ
kiṁ vā nimeṣa-virasena vilokitenā
he nātha nanda-suta gokula-sundarīṇām
antaś-carī sahacarī tvayi bhaktir eva*

What is the gain in speaking to You in a lonely place? What is the use of looking at You with unblinking eyes? O Lord, O son of Nanda, love towards You, which they carry in their hearts, is the only real friend of the beauties of Gokula. (*Padyāvalī*, 370)

❧ *Chapter Ten* ❧

Sarvānanda-pradāyakam

10. 1. The Definition of a Nāṭaka

This chapter will examine the definition of a *nāṭaka*, found in classical textbooks on dramaturgy. Rūpa Gosvāmī, in his *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, naturally delineates only a devotional kind of a *nāṭaka*. In his definition, he adds a quality not found in other definitions, *sarvānanda-pradāyakam*, 'bestowing transcendent bliss upon the audience'. In the last part of this chapter, we will focus on the highest level of religious sentiment delineated in devotional dramas, and consequently religious empathy experienced by the audience, which often resembles quite the opposite of bliss, deep sorrow. First, let us study the foundations of the classical dramaturgical theory which act as the base for the delineation of dramatic sentiments.

In his *Nāṭya-śāstra*, Bharata Muni deals with the ten types of *rūpakas*³⁶⁶, dramas, in the twentieth chapter. Of the ten, *nāṭaka* and *prakaraṇa* are the most elaborate, and should have from five to ten successive acts. The other eight, called *utsṛṣṭikāṅka*, *vyāyoga*, *bhāṇa*, *samavakāra*, *vīthī*, *prahasana*, *ḍima*, and *ihāmṛga*³⁶⁷, are relatively rare, shorter, and less interesting to us right now.

We might, however, passingly notice two of the so-called *uparūpakas*, or minor *rūpakas*, since they are connected with the works of Rūpa Gosvāmī. One is the *nāṭikā*, which is a short drama with a *dhīra-lalita* hero, usually a king, which illustrates how he handles his falling in love with a young maiden, and seeks to make her his second queen, pacifying the first queen in the process. A known classical *nāṭika* is the *Ratnāvalī* of Śrī Harṣa, on the theme of king Udayana of Kauśāmbī.

³⁶⁶ The term *rūpa* or *rūpaka* is explained from the meaning of 'scene', making something visible (*rūpyate pratyakṣi-kriyate yo 'rīhaḥ tad-vācakatvāt kāvyaṁ rūpāṇi*, Abhinavagupta's explanation). Dhanañjaya in his *Daśarūpaka* starts with the fundamental definitions (DR, 1. 7): *avasthānukṛtīr nāṭyaṁ rūpam dṛśyatayocyate rūpakam tat-samāropāt daśadhaiva rasāśrayam*, "Drama is the imitation of situations. It is called a show (*rūpa*) because of the fact that it is seen. It is called representation (*rūpaka*) because of the assumption of the roles by the actors (*samāropa*). It is tenfold, and the shelter of all dramatic sentiments." George C. O. Haas, *The Daśarūpa – A Treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy* (originally published by Columbia University in 1912, reprinted by Motilal Banarsidass), pp. 3-4.

³⁶⁷ Of those, the *utsṛṣṭikāṅka* is a one-act play, predominating in *karuṇa-rasa*, full of despair and wailing of the womenfolk, but the end should not be tragic. A *vyāyoga* is a one-act description of a military conflict. A *bhāṇa* is a monologue of a gay character who speaks of his own exploits, and introduces the speech of others by citation, to which he then responds. A *samavakāra* is a three-act play where heroes are either demons or the demigods, and where the contents of the acts are more or less unrelated to each other. A *vīthī* is a one-act play with a fictitious plot. A *prahasana* is a farce with comic characters. A *ḍima* follows the pattern of a *nāṭaka*, but has only four acts and the characters in it are *yakṣas*, *piśācas* and similar entities, fighting with the demigods. There should be no *hāsyā* or *śṛṅgāra* depicted. The *ihāmṛga* has either four acts, or is a one-act play, its hero is of the *uddhata* type, and the plot centers around the acquisition of a woman. There should be battles and tragic events, but the hero should not die. Summarized from: N. P. Unni, *Nāṭya-śāstra* (Delhi, 2003), pp. 543-568. And, S. N. Shastri, *Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama* (Varanasi, 1961), pp. 3-25. As far as I know, no translator has attempted to translate the terms for the ten types of drama into English.

Rūpa Gosvāmī uses this kind of a situation in some of the acts of his *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka*, when Rādhā as Satyabhāmā is introduced to the court in Dvārakā. Another *uparūpaka* interesting for us is the *bhāṇikā*, a short drama of jest and merry debate. Rūpa Gosvāmī modeled his *Dāna-keli-kaumudī* along the definition of a *bhāṇikā*.

Bharata Muni, in the twenty-second chapter of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, introduces four different styles of speech and gesture (*vṛtti*) for the dramas, born from Lord Viṣṇu and from the four *Vedas*.

ekārṇavam jagat kṛtvā bhagavān acyuto hariḥ
 sete sma nāga-paryāṇke lokān saṁkṣipyā māyayā
 atha vīrya-madonmatthāv asurau madhu-kaiṭabhau
 tarjayām āsatur devaṁ tarasā yuddha-kāṅkṣayā

While Lord Acyuta was resting on His serpent bed, after having compressed the world within Himself by the power of *māyā*, two haughty demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha, desirous of battle, challenged the Lord for a fight. (NS, 22. 2-3)

Agitated by the loud proclamations of the two demons, Lord Brahmā prayed to Lord Viṣṇu to take care of the trouble. Madhusūdana proceeded to fight with them, and during the battle, the four kinds of styles were born from His person.

bhūmi-saṁsthāna-saṁyogaiḥ pāda-nyāsais tadā hareḥ
 ati-bhāro 'bhavad bhūmer bhāratī tatra nirmitā
 valgitaiḥ śārṅga-dhanuṣas tivrair dīpta-tarair atha
 sattvādikāḥ asambhrāntaiḥ sātṭvatī tatra nirmitā
 vicitrair aṅga-hārais tu devo līlā-samudbhavaiḥ
 babandha yac chikhā-pāśaṁ kaiśikī tatra nirmitā
 saṁrambhāvega-bahulair nānācārī-samutthitaiḥ
 niyuddha-karaṇais citraiḥ nirmitārabhaṭī tataḥ

The stepping of the feet of Hari on different spots of the earth caused a burden (*bhāra*) to the earth and hence, *bhāratī-vṛtti* (the eloquent style) was created.

In tune with the intense and brilliant vaultings of Hari, the bearer of the Śārṅga bow, the *sātṭvatī-vṛtti* (the grandiose style) was created, endowed with the firmness of the mind (*sattva*).

The Lord tied the locks of His hair (*keśa*) with graceful movements of various kinds, born of His playful nature, and thereupon, the style called *kaiśikī-vṛtti* (the gay style) was created.

When He indulged in hand-to-hand combat with the two demons, with increased anger and many movements of His feet, the *ārabhaṭī-vṛtti* (the horrific style) was born, with variegated causes for battle. (NS, 22. 11-14)³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ A few verses later, Bharata Muni adds that the four styles are also derived from the four *Vedas*: "From the *Rg Veda*, the *bhāratī-vṛtti*, from the *Yajur Veda* the *sātṭvatī*, from the *Sāma Veda* the *kaiśikī* and from the *Atharva Veda*, the *ārabhaṭī-vṛtti* were evolved. (NS, 22. 24)

All the four *vr̥ttis* should be employed in the *nāṭaka* and the *prakaraṇa*, while in all other *rūpakas*, the *kaiśikī-vr̥tti* should not be resorted to. Bharata's definition of a *nāṭaka* is as follows:

Nāṭaka is that kind of play in which the plot is well-known (*prakhyāta-vastu*), so too is the hero whose character is noble (*udātta*)³⁶⁹. The story deals with a distinguished saintly king (*prakhyāta rājar̥ṣi*), and he may enjoy some superhuman patronage (*divyāśrayopetam*). Prosperity of different kinds, gracefulness and other qualities should embellish it. There should be several acts and interludes. The story of kings abounding in sentiments, moods and actions and representing pleasure as well as pain, characterizes a *nāṭaka*. (NS, 20. 10-12)

The known, so-called mythological basis of the plot in the *nāṭaka*³⁷⁰ distinguishes it from the second major kind of drama, the *prakaraṇa*. The plot of the *prakaraṇa* is exclusively a creation of the poet's imagination, and its hero is a common earthly human, usually of the *dhīra-sānta* type³⁷¹, a peaceful noble *brāhmaṇa* or a merchant. The well-known classical *prakaraṇa* is the *Mṛcchakaṭika* of Śūdraka, portraying a well-bred *brāhmaṇa* Cārudatta who becomes attracted to an unusually virtuous prostitute, Vasantasenā. The amiable character of the two main protagonists is effectively contrasted with many lower characters of various statuses and positions.

Nāṭakas and *prakaraṇas* should both have at least five acts (*aṅkas*), and each *aṅka* should be complete in itself as far as the dramatic action goes; it should represent the events of one single day, and should end with the exit of all characters. If the plot asks for more time than one day within one act, then the missing periods of time,

³⁶⁹ Some theorists have taken the word *udātta* in Bharata's definition to be limiting the main hero of the *nāṭaka* exclusively to the *dhīrodātta* type. Viśvanātha Kavirāja and Simha Bhūpāla, among the more influential theorists, support this idea. However, the fact that many ancient *nāṭakas* exist where the hero is of either the *dhīra-lalita* type (*Svapna-vāsavadatta* of Bhāsa, where king Udayana is the hero), or of the *dhīroddhata* type (*Veṇī-saṁhāra* of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, where Bhīma is the hero), shows this view to be too narrow in the face of extant evidence. Another blunder in interpretation is that of Sāgaranandī, in his *Nāṭaka-lakṣaṇa-ratna-kośa*, who clings to Bharata's point that *dhīra-lalita* heroes are kings, and now, seeing that kings are prescribed as the heroes of a *nāṭaka*, he concludes they should all be of the *dhīra-lalita* class. Again, many *nāṭakas* contradict his view, for example the *Uttara-rāma-carita*, *Mālavikāgnimitra*, *Bāla-rāmāyaṇa* and so on, which all have heroes of the *dhīrodātta* type.

³⁷⁰ This usually means that the plot is taken from the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* or other *Purāṇas*, or is known from traditional accounts of history, for example the life of the famous king of Kauśāmbī around Buddha's time, Vatsarāja Udayana, or Agnimitra, king of the Śuṅga dynasty, and so on.

³⁷¹ Bharata Muni simply forbids the *dhīrodātta* type in the *prakaraṇas*, and discourages the descriptions of the demigods and their worlds, or their carefree enjoyments. The *prakaraṇa* is distinctively human, with presentations of helpless anxiety of the characters and worldly intrigue, without any divine intervention in the course of their fate.

long travels, or events not presentable on stage³⁷² can be supplied through allusions in the *praveśakas* and *viṣkambhakas* (preludes and interludes). In both *nāṭakas* and *prakaraṇas*, there should be not more than four or five main characters, the rest of the roles should be in the background. The drama should be shaped like the tail of a cow, Bharata Muni says, with a bunch of hair at the end. All the special effects should be spared for the dénouement³⁷³, where the sentiment of wonder should predominate.

The *Daśarūpaka* is scarce in defining the *nāṭaka*, while Viśvanātha Kavirāja offers a full definition in his *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, not differing much from Bharata Muni. Following other theorists in dividing poetry into *śravya* (heard) and *dṛśya* (seen), Viśvanātha defines the *dṛśya-kāvya* (i. e. drama) as that which is represented (*abhineya*)³⁷⁴, and derives the word *rūpaka* from *rūpāropa*, 'the imposition of a role upon the actor' (SD, 6. 1). He lists the traditional ten *rūpakas* and eighteen minor *uparūpakas*, and then proceeds to define the most exemplary kind of all of them, the *nāṭaka*:

nāṭakam khyāta-vṛttam syāt pañca-sandhi-samanvitam
vilāsa-rddhyādi-guṇavad- yuktam nānā-vibhūtibhiḥ
sukha-duḥkha-samudbhūti nānā-rasa-nirantaram
pañcādikā daśa-parās tatrāṅkāḥ parikīrtitāḥ
prakhyāta-vamśo rājarṣir dhīrodāttaḥ pratāpavān
divyo 'tha divyādivyo vā guṇavān nāyako mataḥ
eka eva bhaved aṅgī śṛṅgāro vīra eva vā
aṅgam anye rasāḥ sarve kāryo nirvāhaṇo 'dbhutaḥ

A *nāṭaka* should have a known plot, taken from the scriptures, and should be construed with the five *sandhis* (junctures). It should be embellished with various opulences and playful events. It should present the appearance of states of both happiness and distress, and should be full of many *rasas*. Its *aṅkas* are understood to be not less than five and not more than ten. Its hero is a distinguished saintly king of the *dhīrodātta* variety³⁷⁵, powerful and full of virtues. He can either be of the *divya* category (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) or of the *divyādivya* (Śrī Rāma). One *rasa* should be prominent (*aṅgī*), either *śṛṅgāra* or *vīra*, and others are secondary (*aṅga*). The dénouement should be full of wonder. (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 6. 7-10)

The classical theorists do not seem to have any burning differences of opinions concerning the *nāṭaka*, except the interpretation of the word *udātta* in the

³⁷² This includes long speeches which are boring and should be summarized in an interlude, or a great multiplicity of events which would make the *aṅka* too complex. Similarly, actual fights, deaths, dethronements, sieges of the city etc. should never be presented on stage, nor should the hero ever die, neither on stage nor just be described as having died.

³⁷³ French word for the final disentanglement of events in the drama.

³⁷⁴ Four kinds of *abhinaya* (representation) are *āṅgika* (bodily), *vācika* (verbal), *āhārya* (external like costume etc.) and *sāttvika* (exhibits of emotion played out so well that they seem real).

³⁷⁵ As mentioned before, this is merely Viśvanātha's own opinion.

definition of Bharata Muni. Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition mirrors that of Bharata, Viśvanātha Kavirāja and Simha Bhūpāla in its general outline. He does, however, make place for the *dhīra-lalita-nāyaka*, specifically in the case of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Speaking of devotional *nāṭakas*, he adds the quality *sarvānanda-pradāyakam*, where the word *ānanda* is not employed in the sense of mere depersonalized aesthetic joy, but denotes the deep, extraordinary bliss of the blossoming of religious sentiment.

divyena divyādivyena tathādivyena vā yutam
 dhīreṇādhyam udāttena kṛṣṇaś cel lalitena ca
 śṛṅgāra-vīrānyatara- mukhyaṁ ramyetivṛtta-yuk
 prastāvanānta-sambāndhaṁ sandhi-sandhyaṅga-saṅgatam
 sandhyantaraikaviṁśatyā ṣaṭ-triṁśad-bhūṣaṇair yutam
 patākā-sthānakair yuktam arthopakṣepakais tathā
 bhāṣā-vidhāna-saṁyuktam sat-kāvya-guṇa-garbhitam
 nāṭakam doṣa-rahitaṁ sarvānanda-pradāyakam

A *nāṭaka* should have a *divya*, *adivya* or *divyādivya* hero³⁷⁶, who should be of the *dhīrodātta* class, while in the case of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *dhīra-lalita* variety is permissible. The prominent *rasa* should be either *śṛṅgāra* or *vīra*, and the plot should be pleasant. It should begin with a *prastāvanā* (introduction) and be made of *sandhis* (junctures) and *sandhyaṅgas* (parts of junctures). There should be 21 *sandhyantaras* (additional elements within the junctures), and 36 *bhūṣaṇas* (embellishments). The *nāṭaka* should employ *patākā-sthānakas* (incidental indications) and *arthopakṣepakas* (intermediary scenes), and the many prescribed dialects for different characters. It should be decorated with poetic merits (*guṇas*) and should be free of poetic blemishes (*doṣas*). It should bestow extraordinary bliss upon everyone in the audience. (*Nāṭaka-candrikā*, verses 3-6)

Let us now turn to the actual sequence of parts and dramatic devices in the *nāṭaka*. The purificatory and protective rituals before the actual drama, the preparations of the musicians and other assistants, and the introductory dances and music are collectively known as the *pūrvaraṅga*. Bharata Muni describes these procedures in the third, fourth and fifth chapter of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. The drama proper is delineated in the twenty-first chapter of the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, and its embellishments like the 36 *lakṣaṇas* (called *bhūṣaṇas* by Rūpa Gosvāmī), and other poetic beautifications are described in the seventeenth chapter. These same topics are covered step by step in the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, supported with examples. The theory in the *Nāṭaka-candrikā* closely follows the tenets of Bharata Muni and Simha

³⁷⁶ Rūpa Gosvāmī's models for the three are Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rāma, and Yudhiṣṭhira. Rāma is *divyādivya* since, aside from or contrary to His natural *divya* nature, He Himself considers Himself human. The same could perhaps be said of Kṛṣṇa, and Yudhiṣṭhira could in a sense also be called *divya*, due to his godly, saintly qualities. But these details are more or less technical, and Rūpa Gosvāmī simply follows the previous authorities.

Bhūpāla. Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes from a few classical *nāṭakas*, naturally those with Vaiṣṇavite themes (*Abhirāma-rāghava* of Anapota Nāyaka, *Kaṁsa-vadha* of Śeṣa Kṛṣṇa, *Mahāvīra-carita* of Bhavabhūti), but the majority of his examples are supplied from his own *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka*.

10. 2. The *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka*

To be able to follow Rūpa Gosvāmī's terse examples of dramatic devices from the *Lalita-mādhava*, let us first have a glimpse at its contents. The *Lalita-mādhava* fuses the *Vṛndāvana-līlā* with its continuation in *Dvārakā*, and deftly glorifies the supremacy of the love of the *gopīs*. In a sense, it is a continuation of the *Vidagdha-mādhava*, and a final consolation for the *Vṛndāvana-vāsīs* who have been robbed of the pupil of their eyes by the departure of Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā. While the *Vidagdha-mādhava* was a jubilant celebration of the constant association of the Divine couple, the plot of the *Lalita-mādhava* offers ample opportunities for the heart-rending experiences of separation. The drama develops through an intensely intricate plot in its ten acts, with the following themes:

- 1) *Sāyam-utsava*: The Pastimes in the Evening
- 2) *Śaṅkhacūḍa-vadha*: The Destruction of Śaṅkhacūḍa
- 3) *Unmatta-rādhikā*: The Maddened Rādhikā
- 4) *Rādhābhisāra*: Meeting with Rādhā
- 5) *Candrāvalī-lābha*: The Attainment of Candrāvalī
- 6) *Lalitopalabdhī*: The Obtainment of Lalitā
- 7) *Nava-vṛndā-saṅgama*: The Meeting with Nava-vṛndā
- 8) *Nava-vṛndāvana-vihāra*: Pastimes in Nava-vṛndāvana
- 9) *Citra-darśana*: Seeing the Pictures
- 10) *Pūrṇa-manoratha*: All Desires Fulfilled

10. 2. 1. The Secrets of *Paurṇamāsī*

The first act begins by a veiled reference to Kṛṣṇa (Kalānidhī) and Rādhā (Tārā). The *sūtradhara* and the leading actress predict that in the course of time, Kalānidhī will defeat the king of Kirātas (Kaṁsa) and accept the hand of Tārā in marriage. This alleviates the sorrow of all whose hearts break at the thought that Rādhā has been abandoned in the empty *Vṛndāvana*. This is the way how Rūpa Gosvāmī submits to the instruction of his master, Śrī Caitanya, to never make Kṛṣṇa leave

Vṛndāvana. If He apparently leaves, so do His beloveds, although in a sense none of them really left.

In the introductory part of the first act, called *aṅkamukha*³⁷⁷, we again meet the elderly Paurṇamāsī, who this time converses with her young student Gārgī, the daughter of Garga Ṛṣi. The young girl is curious why Paurṇamāsī herself arranged for Rādhā's marriage with Abhimanyu, and why she is now eager to unite Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Paurṇamāsī reveals a secret to her, that in fact, Lord Brahmā gave an amazing benediction to mount Vindhya, that she will have two exceptional daughters who will give her a son-in-law who will be able to defeat even Lord Śiva. The mountain was competing with the king of the mountains, Himālaya, who has Gaurī as his daughter and is proud of his son-in-law, Śiva. Paurṇamāsī reveals that the two daughters, Rādhā and Candrāvalī, have been kidnapped by Pūtanā, who was acting on Kāṁsa's behalf. Kāṁsa, at the time of seizing the eighth child of Devakī, the goddess Ekānamśā, was informed by her that his deadly opponent has already appeared, and that along with Him, eight supreme śaktis will make their appearance. After killing Kāṁsa, the Lord will accept these eight śaktis as His wedded wives. Two of them will be sisters, adorned with the most extraordinary qualities. Kāṁsa therefore ordered his servants like Pūtanā to search for all newborn babies, kill the boys and kidnap the girls. As she was taking the two baby sisters from Vindhya, the priest of Vindhya chanted a demon-killing *mantra*. Pūtanā, greatly afraid, dropped one of the girls (Candrāvalī) while she was flying over the province of Vidarbha, and king Bhīṣmaka rescued her from the river and accepted her as his own daughter (Rukmiṇī). At the age of five, she was forcibly kidnapped from Kuṇḍina by Jāmbavān and brought to Vraja, on the order of the goddess Ekānamśā who stayed in Vindhya hills after having left Mathurā (Vindhya-vāsini). The other seven girls have been brought to Vraja by Pūtanā, and when Pūtanā was killed, Paurṇamāsī arranged that the girls were rescued and accepted in the families of the cowherds. Rādhā was the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, and the other six girls were Lalitā, Viśākhā, Padmā, Śaibyā and Śyāmā. Their apparent marriages with the *gopas* were only an illusion, and all of them possessed an inexhaustible treasure of deep love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. In fact, sixteen thousand *gopīs* continually worshipped Goddess Kātyāyanī to obtain Lord Kṛṣṇa as their husband.

Paurṇamāsī expertly arranges for obstacles in the way of meeting between the *gopī* girls and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, where their mothers-in-law have a lion share. Candrāvalī despairs,

*racayatu mama vṛddhā tarjanam durjanī sā
kavalayatu kulenduṁ ko 'pi durvāda-rāhuḥ
sahacari parihartuṁ nākṣi-bhṛṅgau kṣamete
madhu-ripu-mukha-padma-loka-mādhvika-lobham*

³⁷⁷ The dramatic theory will be explained below. *Aṅkamukha* is a dramatic device of giving a summarized plot of the drama within one act.

Dear friend Padmā, my wicked old mother-in-law may rebuke me, and the planet Rāhu of infamous gossip may devour the moon of my family, still, the two bumblebees of my eyes cannot stop yearning to taste the *mādhvika* nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lotus face. (LM, 1. 38)

The first act opens with a description of the youthful Vraja-gopīs, wholeheartedly occupied with attracting the attention of their beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa briefly meets with Candrāvalī who is brought to Him by Kundalatā, immediately a fierce argument ensues among the girls about Kṛṣṇa's fidelity and partiality to any particular gopī. Kṛṣṇa tries to intervene with a well-chosen poetic verse to appease Candrāvalī. Against His will, He mumbles the words in such a way that His attraction for Rādhā is plainly revealed.

*sarojākṣi parokṣaṁ te kadāpi hṛdayaṁ mama
na spraṣṭuṁ apy alaṁ bādhā rādhā tv ākramya gāhate*

O lotus-eyed girl, when you are not present, suffering cannot touch My heart because Rādhā at once attacks it and forcibly enters. (*seeing His mistake, He fearfully exchanges the words bādhā and rādhā, changing the meaning to 'when you are not present, Rādhā cannot touch My heart because suffering at once attacks it and forcibly enters'*)

Kṛṣṇa then meets with His mother Yaśodā and Balarāma's mother Rohiṇī, who are the only two persons in whom Purnamāsī confides the intricacies of Kṛṣṇa-līlā. The two ladies joyfully observe the gopīs who eagerly help Yaśodā in serving her son. Yaśodā alludes to the special attractiveness and beauty of one slender girl and one boy, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Because of Durvāsā Muni's benediction that whatever Rādhā cooks will be like nectar and will make the eater long-lived, Yaśodā calls Her every day to her palace to cook for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

As Yaśodā is overwhelmed with motherly affection and invites Kṛṣṇa to drink her breastmilk, Kundalatā teases Him that He should certainly do so, now that He is tired of pastimes with the young gopīs. Yaśodā does not understand Kundalatā's crooked smiling, but Kundalatā continues with her naughty revelations and ambiguously refers to the recent event of the *rāsa* dance.³⁷⁸ Yaśodā innocently asks Purnamāsī just what exactly this dance is like, and Purnamāsī, smiling, answers, "O Queen of the cowherds, it is a kind of dance."

Through an expert enigma, Kundalatā informs Kṛṣṇa of Rādhā's longing to meet with Him, and we soon observe Rādhā, pining for the association with Her Lord. As He instantly appears, both of them are overwhelmed by each other's vision.

sa eṣa kim u gopikā-kumudinī-sudhā-didhitiḥ

³⁷⁸ Using the words *bālānām maṇḍalena* which can be interpreted as either 'in the circle of young boys', or 'in the circle of young girls'.

sa eṣa kim u gokula-sphurita-yauva-rājyotsavaḥ
sa eṣa kim u man-manaḥ-pika-vinoda-puṣpākaraḥ
kṛśodari dṛśor dvayīm amṛta-vīcibhiḥ siñcati

Rādhā (*maddened with love*): Is this a nectar moon which makes the lotus flowers, the *gopīs*, blossom? Is this a royal festival of youthfulness appearing in Gokula? Is this a garden of flowers to delight the cuckoo of My heart? O slender girl, this person splashes my eyes with waves of nectar. (LM, 1. 52)

asakṛda asakṛd eṣā kā camatkāra-vidyā
mama rasa-laharibhis tarṣam antas tanoti
viditam ahaha seyaṁ vyāyatāpāṅga-lilā-
madhurima-parivāhā kāpi kalyāṇa-vāpī

Kṛṣṇa (*with astonishment*): What wonderful mystic power is this? Again and again it strikes Me with waves of nectar, but yet it also creates a burning thirst within My heart. Ah! I know, this is a special auspicious lake that overflows its banks with the streams of sweetness in the form of playful sidelong glances. (LM, 1. 53)

The furious Jaṭilā intrudes, accusing Kṛṣṇa of having made all the girls of Gokula stray from the path of righteousness. "Only the young bride of my saintly son has escaped Your clutches! Spare us from having to say Your name even once!" She grabs the girls and leaves.

10. 2. 2. The Worship of Sūrya

The second act opens with a *viṣkambhaka* (interlude), a conversation of Vṛndā and Paurṇamāsī, to whom Uddhava has come to reveal the latest news from Mathurā. After the death of Pūtanā in Gokula, Kāṁsa became suspicious that this is the place where his glorious opponent has been born. He sent his two companions, Ariṣṭa and Keśī, to investigate the matter. Keśī informed him of the glory of Rādhā and Mādhava, and, inspired by Ariṣṭa, Kāṁsa became eager to marry this celestial damsel. He sent the demon Śaṅkhacūḍa to Vraja in order to kidnap her.

Kundalatā joyfully enters, to tell them of a recent wonder. She saw a brilliantly effulgent Sun-god in the vicinity of Govardhana's house. Paurṇamāsī immediately guesses that this is the demon Śaṅkhacūḍa, whose effulgence comes from a dazzling jewel on his head (*cūḍa*). Paurṇamāsī quickly asks for the whereabouts of Rādhā, and orders Kundalatā to bring Kṛṣṇa to protect her from the demon. She herself runs to alarm Balarāma.

Rādhārāṇī, Lalitā and Jaṭilā are on their way to the temple of Sūrya. Kundalatā offers to bring a qualified *brāhmaṇa* to direct the worship, and Jaṭilā is very happy

with the suggestion. When Kundalatā appears with Madhumaṅgala and Kṛṣṇa in the dress of a *brāhmaṇa*, Jaṭilā immediately shoves away Madhu, who already demands payment in candies, and instead chooses the dark-complexioned mysterious *brāhmaṇa*. When Rādhā observes Him, She is inexplicably attracted to Him, but then chides Herself for looking at other men. Knowing that She never feels any attraction to anyone except Kṛṣṇa, She concludes that it must be Him in disguise.

A comedy ensues, with Kṛṣṇa agreeing deeply with Jaṭilā about the disqualification of Madhumaṅgala, who is a friend of 'that wicked Kṛṣṇa'. He assures the trusting lady that He, a decent *brāhmaṇa*, never has anything to do with Kṛṣṇa. Jaṭilā now orders Him to start with the worship and when He asks Rādhā about Her name all too politely, the old lady whispers into His ear that this is not the right way to behave. The worship is diligently performed with amazing *mantras* which are completely new to Jaṭilā, glorifications of Rādhā with occasional additions of a pious 'savitre namaḥ'. When the old lady inquires about these curious *mantras*, Madhumaṅgala jokes about her ignorance, and proudly explains that the *mantras* come from the third chapter of the *Kausumeṣavī-śākhā* of the *Ṛg-veda*³⁷⁹. After the successful completion of the *pūjā*, Jaṭilā generously offers to feed the two able priests, and Madhumaṅgala is elated, while the second *brāhmaṇa* modestly assures her that the friendship of the *Vraja-vāsīs* is enough of a payment for Him. Jaṭilā takes Madhumaṅgala to her home to feed him, and leaves the rest of the group in the forest.

As the *sakhīs* make Rādhā sit on a jeweled throne, the demon Śaṅkhacūḍa appears, hiding behind the vines, and is able to identify Rādhā from the descriptions supplied to him by Candrāvalī's husband Govardhana. The scene is first interrupted by Mukharā who instantly begins flinging insults at Kṛṣṇa. As He hides from her in the dense grove, she sighs that what Paurṇamāsī told her is true, He does indeed assume many forms like Varāha and Nṛsimha. Seeing Śaṅkhacūḍa approaching, she adds that He has now assumed a form of a demon whose effulgence is brighter than the sun. The girls scream that this surely cannot be Kṛṣṇa, while Śaṅkhacūḍa swiftly kidnaps Rādhā and escapes.

In a moment of despair, even Jaṭilā is kind to Kṛṣṇa, and begs Him to save her granddaughter. The *sakhīs* are relieved when they see that the demon has given up Rādhā and has fearfully begun to fight with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa succeeds in killing him and takes the glittering jewel from his head, Balarāma and the other cowherd boys appear on the scene. Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives the jewel to Balarāma, who in turn gives it to Rādhā. Mukharā wipes the perspiration from Kṛṣṇa's brow and glorifies Him as the protector of the beautiful Rādhā.

³⁷⁹ Kusumeṣu is a name of Kāmadeva, Cupid.

10. 2. 3. The Departure for Mathurā

The third act begins with a *viṣkambhaka* where the agitated Vṛndā approaches the elderly Paurṇamāsī, asking for an explanation of a frightening sound she has heard, a deep roaring resounding through all of Vraja. Paurṇamāsī explains that the day before, a great calamity has happened. Kṛṣṇa triumphantly returned home after killing the demon Keśī who was mad with anger because of the death of Ariṣṭa. Now that both are dead, Kāṁsa has sent a messenger to Vṛndāvana, to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā for a wrestling match.

As the news of Akrūra's arrival and the purpose of his visit were spreading in Vraja like wildfire, the anguished cries of the *gopīs* filled the air. A friend of Candrāvalī screamed at her, "O fickle, deaf Candrāvalī! Even though Kṛṣṇa has already climbed the chariot and is leaving Gokula behind, you are still stringing this flower garland! Has the loud wailing of the *gopīs* not entered your ears?" Candrāvalī became overwhelmed, the garland slipped from her hands, and she fainted as if dead. Rādhā cried bitterly, the next moment rolled in front of the chariot, then tearfully gazed at Kṛṣṇa's face, then again prayed to Balarāma that they should stay in Vraja. Although She never dared to look at Kṛṣṇa in the presence of superiors before, She now stood like a statue in front of the chariot, observing Him intently, while her cheeks were wet with tears.

Kṛṣṇa, with tearful eyes, tied the hearts of the *gopīs* to Himself with a kind promise of quick return. After the chariot left, Rādhā was plunged into an ocean of lamentation, sometimes crying, sometimes fainting, running around, speaking incoherently and suddenly becoming silent.

*uttāpi pūṭa-pākato 'pi garala-grāmād api kṣobhaṇo
dambholer api duḥsahaḥ kaṭur alaṁ hṛn-magna-śalyād api
tīvraḥ prauḍha-visūcika-nicayato 'py uccair mamāyaṁ balī
marmāṇy adya bhinatti gokula-pater viśleṣa-janma jvaraḥ*

The fire of separation from Lord Kṛṣṇa, the king of Gokula, is breaking My heart. It is more painful than a strong dose of the most severe poison, more intolerable than Indra's thunderbolt, more sharp than a spear entering the heart, and more horrifying than the last stage of cholera. (LM, 3. 28)

Plagued by apparitions of Her beloved Lord, Rādhā roamed around Vraja with her brokenhearted *sakhīs* whose consolations She was unable to hear, and finally they arrived at the bank of the Yamunā. Rādhā fainted and the *sakhīs* tried to revive Her with the smell of a garland once worn by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Regaining consciousness after a long time, Rādhā says, "Lalitā, listen. I saw a frightening dream. It was so vivid that I thought I was awake. In this dream a wicked messenger of king Kāṁsa came to

Vṛndāvana and with a chariot Kṛṣṇa then ... I pray there will be peace and prosperity in Vraja. To become free from the ill effects of this bad dream, I will bathe in the Yamunā and then go see Kṛṣṇa."

Praying to the Sun-god to fulfill their desire, Rādhā and Viśākhā enter the waters of the river, and allured by the apparition of Kṛṣṇa as if hiding among the blue lotuses, they both enter the deep water and drown. The grief-stricken Lalitā wishes to follow them, but is prevented by Mukharā. Unable to bear the separation from her two friends, she decides to jump from the Govardhana Hill and end her tortured existence. Mukharā, seeing all three girls devoured by death, is so terribly disturbed that she wants to drown along, but a voice from the sky prevents her, predicting that she will soon enjoy the festival of the nectar of transcendental bliss. The voice informs her that Rādhā and Viśākhā have attained the Sun planet, and that their position is glorified by all the demigods.

10. 2. 4. *Meeting Rādhā in a Play*

In the interlude at the beginning of the fourth act, we hear from Gārgī and Uddhava about the wrestling match in Kāṁsa's arena. Mother Yaśodā has come to participate in the celebration of Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's *yajñopavīta* ceremony. Sāṅdīpani Muni gloriously becomes the spiritual teacher of the two boys. Kṛṣṇa rescues his *guru*'s son Madhumaṅgala, and gives him as a *dakṣiṇā* back to him. Madhumaṅgala is now again fortunate to stay in Mathurā close to his beloved Kṛṣṇa.

Uddhava reveals to Gārgī that Kṛṣṇa's heart breaks due to the sad fate of Rādhā, and that Candrāvalī has recently been kidnapped from Vraja by her brother Rukmī, so that she could be married to Śiśupāla. Padmā, who is actually the daughter of king Nagnajit, as well as Śyāmā, daughter of the king of Madra, Bhadrā, daughter of the king of Kekaya, and Śaibyā, daughter of the king of Śaibya, have all been taken back to the palaces of their fathers. All the other 16 thousand young *gopīs* who worshipped goddess Kātyāyanī, have recently been kidnapped by a demon. Having heard all these upsetting news, Lord Kṛṣṇa cannot find even a moment of peace in Mathurā.

To console the despairing Lord, Paurṇamāsī stages a drama about His pastimes in Gokula, with the help of heavenly Gandharvas³⁸⁰. Mukharā also witnesses the play and learns how misinformed she has been during the pastimes in Vraja. Seeing Rādhā in the drama, she rushes forward to embrace Her, and is stopped by Paurṇamāsī, who has to tell her that this is only a drama. The old lady was hoping that Rādhā, who has gone to the Sun planet, would now descend back with these heavenly actors. She regrets her opposition to the meetings of Rādhā and Mādhava,

³⁸⁰ Such an inset play is technically called a *garbhāṅka*, play within a play.

and from the other side of the audience, Madhumāṅgala bittely calls her an old *rākṣasī* who was barking on him like a dog if he happened to come close to the edge of her garden. Mukharā is embarrassed, and blames Paurṇamāsī for not revealing the secret to her.

The little drama takes a humorous turn when Vṛndā arranges that Jaṭilā is informed of the mischievous plan that Kṛṣṇa intends to dress as Abhimanyu. The old lady rushes home and finds her real son there, imagining he is Kṛṣṇa in disguise. She chases him away while everyone has a good laugh. The desperate Abhimanyu seeks the assistance of Lalitā, who speaks to Jaṭilā and reveals to her that the man she has been hitting and cursing was her own son. She is embarrassed to come before him, and Abhimanyu leaves home to finish his business of buying cows. In the meantime, Kṛṣṇa Himself appears amidst the girls, whom the sudden arrival of Jaṭilā makes greatly uncomfortable. But the old lady is now meek and humble, she congratulates Rādhā for staying next to Her husband, and blesses them to worship the goddess Gomaṅgalā together.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, after seeing the charming play, opens His heart to Paurṇamāsī, despairing that His mind burns in suffering, unable to find any peace. The saintly Paurṇamāsī consoles Him that the second part of the drama on the story of Candrāvalī will soon be presented. She begs for permission to leave for Kuṇḍina.

10. 2. 5. Marriage with Candrāvalī (Rukmiṇī)

In Kuṇḍina, the capital of the Vidarbha province, king Bhīṣmaka is getting ready to perform the marriage of his daughter. Ashamed that she has spent her childhood in the village, she keeps it a secret and changes her name Candrāvalī into Rukmiṇī. Prince Rukmī, her brother, opposes the wishes of the princess herself, and of their father, and invites the prince of Cedi, Śiśupāla, to the wedding. Rukmiṇī sends a messenger to Kṛṣṇa with a letter from her, but the messenger has not yet returned. Many tents of the opposing kings now perch in front of the city, and Paurṇamāsī is distraught.

She is happy to meet Nārada Muni who informs her of the latest events in Mathurā. After arranging the death of Kālayavana through the sleeping Mucukunda, Lord Kṛṣṇa has moved all the residents of Mathurā to a new city on the western coast of the sea, called Dvārakā. Paurṇamāsī and Nārada are greeted by the messenger who, despondent, has brought back a reply from Kṛṣṇa. Not knowing that Rukmiṇī is Candrāvalī, Lord Kṛṣṇa has written back that He only loves the birds of the Vṛndāvana forest. But all of them are happy to hear that Kṛṣṇa nevertheless decorates the city of Kuṇḍina right now, on the invitation of two kings, Kratha and Kaiśika, who have been ordered by Lord Brahmā to crown Lord Kṛṣṇa as the king of all kings. The two kings ask for a benediction at the end of the coronation: "O Lord

of the Yadus, please accept the hand of Rukmiṇī who is a *tapasvinī* although she has not performed any *tapasya*.” Lord Kṛṣṇa predicts that her desire will be granted.

Lord Kṛṣṇa and His dear companion Garuḍa appear in the midst of the merry celebrations in the city, dressed up as dancers. They come close to the temple of Durgā where Rukmiṇī is supposed to perform her worship. Distressed that the messenger has not yet returned from Kṛṣṇa and fearing that she will be married to Śiśupāla, Rukmiṇī decides to commit suicide in a big pool of ghee prepared for the sacrifices. Her friend Mādhavī tries to console her, but to no avail. When Kṛṣṇa and Garuḍa spot the princess from afar, Garuḍa glorifies her as very beautiful. Lord Kṛṣṇa, not so careful in observing, retorts, “Friend, it is so, but what does it matter? Kṛṣṇa is not enchanted by mere beauty.”

Rukmiṇī gives last instructions to Mādhavī, that she should take care of the young *bakula* tree she has planted with a seed from Vṛndāvana. She approaches the pool of ghee, and at that moment, Kṛṣṇa recognizes the familiar sound of her ankle-bells. Candrāvalī tearfully speaks her last words, “O sister Rādhā, we will never meet again! O dear friend Padmā, where have you gone? O mother Yaśodā, o Queen of Gokula, I will never see you again! O Lord of my life! O Kṛṣṇa! I pray that birth after birth my eyes may attain Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face filled with the honey of His gentle smile.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa hastily embraces her to save her, but she thinks it is Mādhavī who is stopping her. As a last token, she pulls a ring from her hand and wishes to put it into Mādhavī’s hands, to be given to her Lord. But placing the ring into His hands, she notices they are the hands of a man, and she looks up into His face. She screams with joy, “My master embraces me and speaks to me!” and faints.

Bhīṣmaka and Paurṇamāsī enter, congratulating Lord Kṛṣṇa. He reasons to Himself that by accepting Candrāvalī who is Rādhā’s sister, He is not offending His great love for Rādhā. The two exit to leave for Dvārakā, and a loud commotion ensues when the greedy princes headed by Śiśupāla notice that all has been accomplished in their absence. Balarāma appears with a large army, and the princes along with the rebellious Rukmī are defeated.

10. 2. 6. Pastimes in Nava-vṛndāvana

We move to Dvārakā, where the beautiful *gopī* girls are all destined to meet, in the jubilant fruition of their fortunes – married life with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Act six opens with a *viṣkambhaka* (interlude) where Uddhava and Nārada discuss the latest events.

Uddhava is dejected, feeling that he has offended his master Kṛṣṇa with a suggestion to king Satrājīt to give the *syamantaka* jewel and his daughter Satyabhāmā to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The king has embarrassed himself by not wishing to part with the jewel, and now, his mother has arrived to Dvārakā along with princess Satyabhāmā, who is given as a bride to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

When Nārada touches the topic of Kṛṣṇa's grief due to having been forced to leave Vṛndāvana, Uddhava emphatically explains the Lord's pain to him. Nārada inquires, "What exactly causes Him so much pain?" Uddhava is almost speechless, and hardly able to answer. "The younger sis ..." Nārada smiles, and asks, "Well, if a person who wears a ring thinks that the ring is lost and cries, what can be done to console him?" Uddhava is startled. "Tell me, is the younger Goddess alive?" "Alive? What are you saying? She is decorating the city of Dvārakā right now."

Nārada explains to Uddhava, whose hairs are standing on end due to excitement and joy, that childless Satrājīt was praying to the Sun-god for undying wealth and for the best child. Sūryadeva gave him the Goddess Rādhā as a daughter, along with the jewel of the demon Śaṅkhacūḍa, which Rādhā brought with Her to the Sun. She is now known as Satyabhāmā, and Sūrya has instructed Her to not reveal Her actual identity to anyone until the jewel is not tied to Her wrist by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Satyabhāmā has therefore come to the palace of Rukmiṇī and was introduced to her, but the two of them did not yet recognize each other. Viśākhā, who has drowned along with Rādhā, is actually a form of the river Yamunā, whom Sūrya, her father, has sent to Vṛndāvana so that he would be connected to Kṛṣṇa-līlā.

The wife of Sūrya, Samjñā, who is the daughter of the celestial architect Viśvakarmā, has lovingly asked her father to build a replica of Vṛndāvana within the palace of Dvārakā, because Rādhā was distraught by being away from Vraja. Rukmiṇī entrusts Satyabhāmā to the care of Nava-vṛndā, a female disciple of Viśvakarmā who is expert in gardening, and who takes care of the Nava-vṛndāvana gardens.

In the next scene, Lord Kṛṣṇa enters, after gloriously ending the episode with the *syamantaka* jewel. As the jewel continuously reminds Him of Rādhā, He cannot stop lamenting about Her absence from His life. Madhumāṅgala inquires from Him about the details of the fight for the jewel, and Kṛṣṇa explains that He entered the cave of Jāmbavān and fought with him fiercely, but then the old bear remembered the previous pastimes in Rāma-līlā and understood that this is the same Lord of his life. He respectfully seated the Lord on the throne and went to fetch the jewel from his treasury. He was gone for some time, and then, an old lady approached Lord Kṛṣṇa. She explained the dilemma to him: "The king of bears wavers. If he gives the jewel to You, his daughter will be so aggrieved that she will at once give up her life, and if he does not give the jewel to You, his master, this will be a great offense." Lord Kṛṣṇa became curious about the daughter, and the old nurse explained that as soon as Jāmbavān brought home this astonishing jewel, his daughter became completely overwhelmed. She presses it to her breasts, wets it with her tears, and sighs holding it while her body trembles. The nurse explained to him that the daughter spends her time exclusively in the company of her Deities, whom she calls Rādhikā and Mādhava, worshipping them with great care while shedding floods of tears, conversing with them and happily urging them to meet each other. As Lord Kṛṣṇa inquired about these two Deities, the nurse carefully looked at Him and exclaimed that actually, the male Deity looks exactly like Him. She ran to tell the girl, and the

princess emerged from the back of the cave, hiding and observing Lord Kṛṣṇa. She then became pale, and discarding all shame, fell at His feet crying.

Lord Kṛṣṇa continues, "Then I could understand that Jāmbavatī is actually Lalitā, that she worships Deities of Rādhā and Myself, and that the *syamantaka* jewel is the same as the jewel we have obtained from Śaṅkhacūḍa. These facts made Me overwhelmed with wonder." The elated Jāmbavān then explained to the Lord that he attained this special daughter when the Sun-god ordered him to visit Govardhana. There, he saw this extraordinary girl flying through the air, and had saved her life.

Kṛṣṇa confides in Madhumaṅgala that up to now, as He was busy pleasing His friends, the feelings of separation from Rādhārāṇī were somewhat subdued, but now, seeing the anguish of Lalitā, His heart burns in a conflagration of feelings. "Only the sight of Vṛndāvana could console Me," He says, and walks into the palace in Dvārakā.

In the same palace, Rādhā laments that Her Lord is ruling in Mathurā, while She is imprisoned elsewhere. The girls of the palace keep luring Her to become attracted to the king of Dvārakā, but Rādhā angrily desists.

Nava-vṛndā (*laughing*): O simple hard-hearted girl, know that the emperor of Dvārakā is the king of Vraja.

Rādhā (*excited*): Is this the truth?

Nava-vṛndā (*aside*): Alas! How have I carelessly forgotten my vow! (*openly*) He is addressed in many ways, Rājendra, Rāmacandra, Upendra, Vrajendra, many names.

Bakulā: Therefore I say, give up Your attachment to that other man, and focus Your energy on pleasing the emperor.

Rādhā: My Lord Kṛṣṇa wears a peacock feather crown and a necklace of *guñja* berries. The flute placed to His mouth gives us great happiness. My heart will never accept any other man than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the most handsome man in the whole universe.

Bakulā: Friend, You are too simple. That is why You so deeply love this hard-hearted man.

Rādhā: Do not talk like this! Even though he be harsh and neglect Me for thousands of years, never, even after countless births, will My heart become bewildered and give up the loving service to My most beloved Kṛṣṇa.

Nava-vṛndā: Bakulā, stop. She is faithful to Her beloved.

Even in Nava-vṛndāvana, the replica of Vraja, Rādhā remains brokenhearted and begins to doubt the promising consolation of the Sun-god, who has bid her farewell



with the words, "Go to Dvārakā, and enter the Nava-vṛndāvana gardens. There, You will happily enjoy pastimes with Your beloved."

Rādhā laments to Nava-vṛndā that She is unhappy because She is unable to perform Her regular activities. She explains that She used to worship a Deity of Kṛṣṇa with a flute in His hands. Nava-vṛndā thinks it wise to show Her the Deity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa made of sapphires, whom the sculptor Viśvakarmā has made to decorate the Nava-vṛndāvana. As Rādhā approaches the Deity, She begins to imagine it is Her Lord personally, and begins to talk with Him in an angry voice. Nava-vṛndā makes Her touch the chest of the Deity, and Rādhā becomes aware that this is His Deity only, made of glistening sapphires. She carefully decorates the statue, worshipping Him with great love and longing.

Since Queen Rukmiṇī's companion Mādhavī comes by, Nava-vṛndā suggests to Rādhā that they should leave the place. It so happens that right then, Kṛṣṇa and Madhumaṅgala enter the Nava-vṛndāvana garden, and walk up to the decorated Deity.

Kṛṣṇa: (*while walking, He eagerly gazes ahead and becomes filled with wonder*) How can it be? Is that a graceful statue of Myself, decorated with forest flowers? (*steps closer*) This must be the work of Viśvakarmā, the master of all sculptors.

Madhumaṅgala: (*eagerly*) O! O! After a long time, I have again found my dear friend! You are indeed a king, not like me, a poor Brahmin boy. (*inspecting*) Dear friend, look! A girl full of love has been worshipping this statue.

Kṛṣṇa: Friend, your observation is correct. This flower garland, not in its proper position, proclaims that the lady was overcome with emotions. The breaks in the sandalwood paste show that she was crying a shower of tears. This shaky *tilaka* mark means that her hand was trembling. All the worship done by this lady loudly speaks of her love.

(*voice behind the scenes*): This way, o *sakhī*, this way.

Kṛṣṇa: O friend, surely the young girls who were worshipping this Deity are returning. Hide the Deity in the forest grove! I will take the decorations from it, stand on the altar just like it did, and I will be able to observe the strong feelings of love of these girls with *bimba* fruit lips. (*they both do accordingly*)

(*accompanied by two gopī friends, Śrī Rādhā enters*)

Rādhā (*looks ahead and becomes thrilled*): Oh! This statue is so full of sweetness! Mysteriously, it makes me think I am seeing Mādhava right in front of Me.

Bakulā (*aside, to Nava-vṛndā*): O Vṛnde, just see the handsomeness of this statue!

Nava-vṛndā (*with a smile*): Bewildered girl, the madness of love has entered you too. You also imagine that the statue is actually Kṛṣṇa!

Kṛṣṇa (*in wonder and joy*): Ah! Who is this wish-fulfilling flowering vine who forcibly attracts My heart?

(*with great desire*) The brilliant lotus of Her face speaks eloquently about the inner torment at the core of Her heart. With black curly locks of hair dancing at the corners of Her lotus eyes, this wonderful beauty has again entered the pathway of My sight.

(*looks again, struck with wonder*) Ah! Can this really be so! Is this really My beloved Rādhā, dearer to Me than My own life!? (*struggling to check a flood of tears, He tries to think*) This girl is undoubtedly a statue of Rādhā, created by the sculptor Viśvakarmā to give Me a bit of happiness here in this Nava-vṛndāvana. How could Rādhā come here through all the doors of Dvārakā, and enter into the innermost part of My palace?

Rādhā (*keeps gazing into Kṛṣṇa's lotuslike face*): Oh! Oh! I am filled with such a strong desire to actually meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa! In this confused state, I began to believe the statue is really Him. (*crying unabashedly, She folds Her hands*) O reflection of Kṛṣṇa, is the real lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa well and happy now?

Kṛṣṇa (*jubilantly*): O illusion of Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa is indeed happy now. He is happy because You, exactly resembling Rādhikā's features, are now asking about His welfare.

Rādhā (*surprised*): Well done, Vṛndā, well done! Well done! This statue is so expertly crafted it is even able to speak sweet words!

Kṛṣṇa: Oh! This magical mirage of Rādhā is very wonderful! Rādhā is really reflected in it!

Rādhā (*jubilant and full of wonder*): The sweet fragrance of this statue delights My nose. The splendid color of the Deity, dark like a monsoon cloud, attracts My eyes. The charming words spoken by the statue make My ears tremble with happiness. Ah! It is really just like Kṛṣṇa Himself!

(*crying in sorrow*) O statue of Kṛṣṇa, this Rādhā begs You with millions of sweet words: Please! Become a living, moving person and kindly give some happiness to the eyes of this poor girl, so hurt with pain.

Kṛṣṇa: O sculptor, you have made Me so fortunate. (*He cries a stream of tears.*)

Nava-vṛndā: Dear friend, with the edge of Your sari You should wipe away the tears from the lotus face of Your beloved.

(*Rādhā shyly does that*)

Nava-vṛndā (*aside*): Just see how Mādhava, overjoyed by the touch of Rādhikā, His tearful eyes focused on Her, is now leaning back on the *kadamba* tree behind Him.

Rādhā: Oh! Oh! The statue really became alive! (*She faints*)

This extraordinary reunion is interrupted by the arrival of Candrāvalī, or Queen Rukmiṇī. On the orders of Nava-vṛndā, Bakulā quickly takes away the unconscious Rādhā, while Madhumaṅgala and Kṛṣṇa have to face the suspicious Queen. Surmising that Her Lord has been entertaining Himself in the company of Satyabhāmā, her jealous anger flares up, and she walks away dispirited.

In the eighth act, we enjoy the sight of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa spending time together in the Nava-vṛndāvana gardens. Rādhā is occasionally overcome by grief, due to separation from her friends. Kṛṣṇa tries to console her by telling Her that He has recently met Viśākhā, who has been leading an ascetic life in the Khāṇḍava forest, and has happily brought her to Dvārakā. However, since Viśākhā, who is Yamunā, the daughter of the Sun-god, has been informed by him that she will not be able to meet Rādhā until the *syamantaka* jewel is secured, she has hidden herself until then.

Viśvakarmā creates two caskets of ornaments for Queen Rukmiṇī and also for Satyabhāmā. Mādhavī receives the two caskets, and guessing that Viśvakarmā has made better ornaments for Satyabhāmā, she exchanges the two sets. Rukmiṇī therefore appears in Nava-vṛndāvana dressed up as Satyabhāmā and Kṛṣṇa mistakes her for His beloved Rādhā. Vṛndā, however, succeeds to indicate that this is in fact the Queen who wants to discern the state of Kṛṣṇa's heart. He pretends to realize that this is not His Queen, and runs into the palace to inform her.

The ninth act describes the pastime of watching the pictures on the wall of a cave in Govardhana Hill. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoy observing the miniatures of Their Vṛndāvana-līlā. Seeing Kubjā, Rādhā smiles, and Kṛṣṇa hastily explains that this lady was Rādhā's messenger, calling Him back to Vṛndāvana and pulling His dhoti. Rādhā comments, "You cannot hide anything from Me."

In the tenth act, the jealous anger of Queen Rukmiṇī is finally broken, when she recognizes Rādhā as her sister, and the *syamantaka* jewel is tied to Her wrist. The rest of the girls of Gokula appear, and the other residents of Vraja come to visit Dvārakā, transforming it back into Vraja. Rukmiṇī gracefully takes Rādhā's hand and places it into Kṛṣṇa's hand. The other sixteen thousand *gopīs* that were rescued from Narakāsura, as well as the six girls that have been scattered by fate, Śaibyā, Śyāmā, Padmā, Bhadrā, Lalitā and Viśākhā all meet each other and their mistresses. A great wedding is performed, concluding the drama in great bliss and festivities.

10. 3. Examples from the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*

Let us now turn to the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, which presents the details of dramatic theory with the examples from the *Lalita-mādhava*. The terminology of the dramatic theory is technical and peculiar, often using known words in specific, narrow or altogether new meanings. Since most of the terms are not easily translated into English, they should always be consulted along with the additional definition of the term, for a clearer idea about the shade of meaning. Oftentimes, the definition itself is the only clue for an adequate translation. I mostly follow the English translations presented by Surendra Nath Shastri in his reliable work.³⁸¹

10. 3. 1. Varieties of the Prologue

The *nāṭaka* begins with the introduction of the theme, *prastāvanā*, and while some theorists include the benedictory *ślokas*, called *nāndī*, within the *prastāvanā*, others opine that *nāndī* is actually part of the *pūrvaraṅga* and is recited before the *prastāvanā*. In the extant manuscripts of *nāṭakas*, naturally, no details of the *pūrvaraṅga* procedures are mentioned, and for all practical purposes the drama begins with the *nāndī* verses, followed by the rest of the *prastāvanā*. The *nāndī* verses are either an expression of blessings (*āśīrvāda*), a statement of praise and respect (*namaskriyā*) towards the Lord, *brāhmaṇas* or demigods, or, they give a hint about the theme of the drama (*vastu-nirdeśa*). The *nāndī* verses may consist of eight, ten or twelve *padas*, while some theorists are liberal to the point of allowing it to be as long as is needed to express the author's idea. The interpretation of the word *pada* varies, it is sometimes understood as a partial sentence in the whole benediction (*Nāṭya-śāstra* gives such an example), while other theorists take it to mean either an inflected word (Śiṃha Bhūpāla and Rūpa Gosvāmī), a quarter of a verse, or parts of the verse formed by the caesuras (Abhinavagupta). The *nāndī* verses should be gracefully composed with images of the moon, lotuses, *cakora* birds, lilies and the like, bringing good fortune to the play, and should begin with an auspicious letter. Rūpa Gosvāmī presents the two *nāndī* verses of the *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka*, the first of them is an example of an *āśīrvādātma-nāndī*, and consists of twelve *padas* (in this case inflected words):

sura-ripu-sudṛśāṃ uroja-kokāṇ mukha-kamalāni ca khedayann akhaṇḍaḥ
ciram akhila-suhṛc-cakora-nandī diśatu mukunda-yaśaḥ-śaśi mudam vah

³⁸¹ S. N. Shastri, *The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama* (Varanasi 1961).

The moon of the fame of Lord Mukunda distresses the *cakravāka*-like breasts of the wives of the demons, and makes their lotus-like faces wither, but it is pleasing to His devotees, who are like *cakora* birds. Let His fame forever give pleasure to you all. (LM, 1. 1)

The *prastāvanā* part of the drama, Rūpa Gosvāmī specifies, should be presented in the *bhāratī-vṛtti*, verbal, eloquent style. *Bhāratī-vṛtti* is employed in four introductory situations, in the *prarocanā* (laudation), *āmukha* (introduction), *vīthī* (avenue) and *prahasana* (humor)³⁸². Of these, *prarocanā* and *āmukha* are sometimes understood to be parts of the *pūrvaraṅga*. In any case, they are the first references to the actual drama, where the *sthāpaka* (introducer) tries to whet the interest of the audience for the drama, by mentioning the time and place of the performance, and praising the aesthetic abilities of the spectators. In later dramas, the function of the *sthāpaka* is often merged with the figure of the *sūtradhara*, stage manager. Rūpa Gosvāmī's dramas start with the speeches of the *sūtradhara* (who, in fact, represents Rūpa Gosvāmī himself), who recites the *nāndīs*. In both the *Lalita-* and *Vidagdha-mādhava*, he intimates that Lord Śiva in his form of Gopīśvara, the special protector of Vraja, has commanded him to write the drama, and he is eager to present it to an audience of exalted *Vaiṣṇavas*.

The *Lalita-mādhava* is staged for a gathering of sincere *Vaiṣṇavas* living in Vṛndāvana, in the temple of Mādhava at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, near the Govardhana Hill, on the auspicious occasion of Dīpāvalī. Rūpa Gosvāmī as the *sūtradhara* uses the opportunity to express deep feelings of humility and inadequacy in presenting the drama, but consoles himself with a verse which, in effect, glorifies the saintly *Vaiṣṇavas* as the most receptive and appreciative public. The leading actress then enters, expressing her reluctance in accepting a role in the drama. The *sūtradhara* encourages her in the *prarocanā* speech:

ārye kim ity evam ucyate. paśya paśya –
cakāṣṭi śarad-utsavaḥ sphurati vaiṣṇavānām sabhā
cirasya giri udgiraty amala-kīrti-dhārām hareḥ
kim anyad iha mādhave madhura-mūrtir udbhāsate
tad eṣa paramodayas tava viśuddha-puṇya-śriyaḥ

O noble lady, what are you saying? Look, look! The festive autumn season has come, and the *Vaiṣṇavas* have assembled here. The Govardhana Hill continually emits streams of pure glory of Lord Hari. Even more, Mādhava Himself, the form of sweetness personified, is gracing the assembly. This is the supreme rise of the opulence of your pure merits. (LM, 1. 7)

³⁸² The last two are easily confused with two types of *rūpakas* of the same name. Here, however, they are treated as parts of the *sthāpanā*.

Rūpa Gosvāmī proceeds with definitions in the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, dividing the *āmukha*³⁸³ (introduction), which is usually equated with the *prastāvanā* and the *sthāpanā* (prologue or establishment of the play), into five subdivisions: *kathodghāta* (real commencement), *prayogātiśaya* (personal presentation), *pravartaka* (entrance of characters), *udghātyaka* (revealed indication) and *avalagita* (continuance)³⁸⁴. These are the five different forms of the entrance of characters, and will be delineated below.

The *kathodghāta* (real commencement) denotes a direct entrance of the character of the drama, while repeating the statement of the *sūtradhara* or reproducing the substance of the *sūtradhara*'s prediction. The *prayogātiśaya* (personal presentation) is a direct introduction of the character by name by the *sūtradhara*. In the *pravartaka* (entrance of characters) the sameness of the time, season and the actor's qualities described by the *sūtradhara* enables the entrance of a particular actor through a double meaning. The *Vidagdha-mādhava* uses this mode for the entrance of the elderly Paurṇamāsī, through a verse recited by the *sūtradhara* which actually glorifies the full moon (*paurṇamāsī*) in the spring season. The *udghātyaka* (revealed indication) is the intimation of the details of the plot, understood through a revelation, in the minds of both the actors on stage and the audience. The *udghātyaka* variety is used in the *Lalita-mādhava*, where, due to fear of Kāṁsa, the marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā is alluded to under false names (*Kalānidhi* and *Tārā*), in a verse spoken by the *sūtradhara* and overheard by Paurṇamāsī from behind the scene. Paurṇamāsī understands the hint and becomes consoled, revealing the mystery to the audience through her audible deliberation. The *avalagita* variety (continuation) of the entrance of actors is used when half the task is completed by another person (in this case the actor entering). Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes from the *Kāṁsa-vadha*, where the *sūtradhara* merely summons the '*naṭarāja puruṣottama*', 'the noble king of the actors' but is surprised to see the actual Puruṣottama enter, Lord Gopāla.

Rūpa Gosvāmī adds that in the case of a *nāṭaka* where the main *rasa* is *śṛṅgāra*, there is no need for the *vithis* and *prahasanas* within the introduction. The *āmukha* in one of its five varieties is sufficient. We now proceed to the main plot of the drama.

10. 3. 2. The Elements of the Plot

The plot of the *nāṭaka* can be seen from a few different angles of vision. It is broadly divided into *ādhikārika* (main) and *prāsaṅgika* (subsidiary), the first relating

³⁸³ Called so because it lasts up to the *mukha-sandhi*, the first of the five junctures.

³⁸⁴ Of these five, the first three are parts of the *āmukha*, and the last two are subdivisions of the *vithi*.

to the main hero, and the second to the sub-heroes of shorter episodes. The *prāsaṅgika* part of the plot will be introduced through *patākās* (episodes), *prakarīs* (incidents) and *patākā-sthānakas* (indications of episodes).

The main plot is divided into five *kāryāvasthās* (stages of action), called *ārambha* (commencement), *yatna* (endeavor), *prāpty-āśā* (prospect of success), *niyatāpti* (certainty of success) and *phalāgama* (consummation). Mirroring these five stages of action, Bharata Muni and the other theorists introduce the five *artha-prakṛtis*, or elements of the plot, called *bīja* (germ), *bindu* (drop), *patākā* (episode), *prakarī* (incident), and the *kārya* (dénouement).

The difference between these two concepts is obviously minimal, and it immediately becomes clear that the drama passes rather naturally from its budding stages to an endeavor for the attainment of the goal, which is sidetracked by the additional episodes and incidents, and then begins to turn towards greater hopes for success, ending in the attainment of the desired goal.

The two concepts of *kāryāvasthās* and *artha-prakṛtis* are connected through a third concept, that of *sandhis* or junctures. The *sandhis* are again five, related to each stage of the previous divisions: *mukha-sandhi* (opening juncture), *pratimukha-sandhi* (expansion of action), *garbha-sandhi* (development of action), *vimarśa-sandhi* (pause) and the *nirvahaṇa-sandhi* (the final juncture).

The dramatic theorists focus minutely on each of these *sandhis*, prescribing for each of them a set of additional sub-elements, called *sandhyaṅgas*. Since the number of the *sandhyaṅgas* is often more than ten for each of the five *sandhis*, a great portion of the *Nāṭaka-candrikā* deals with them, giving examples for each.

10. 3. 3. The Mukha-sandhi

The *mukha-sandhi* (opening juncture) combines the *bīja* (germ of the plot) and the *ārambha* (commencement of dramatic action). Within the *Lalita-mādhava*, the *mukha-sandhi* extends through the first two acts, and the revelation of attraction for each other on the part of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is the *bīja*, germ of the plot.

The *mukha-sandhi* has got twelve *sandhyaṅgas* enumerated and exemplified in the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*. Their names are *upakṣepa* (suggestion), *parikara* (enlargement), *parinyāsa* (establishment), *vilobhana* (allurement), *yukti* (resolve), *prāpti* (attainment), *samādhāna* (settling), *vidhāna* (conflict of feelings), *paribhāvanā* (surprise), *udbheda* (disclosure), *bheda* (division) and *karaṇa* (resumption).

The reversion of their order is permitted by Bharata Muni and a few other theorists, while some adjust their sequence minutely. The *Nāṭya-darpaṇa* insists that at least the first three of the *sandhyaṅgas* should be used in the same succession. The order of the other elements is less fixed, although it is best to use *samādhāna*

somewhere in the middle and *udbheda* and *karaṇa* towards the end of the opening juncture. Dhanika, commenting on the *Daśarūpaka*, opines that *upakṣepa*, *parikara*, *parinyāsa*, *yukti*, *udbheda* and *samādhāna* are indispensable, while the others are used according to the discretion of the author.

In the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, Rūpa Gosvāmī gives the following definitions and examples. *Upakṣepa* (suggestion) is an intimation of the *bīja* (the germ of the plot). In the *Lalita-mādhava*, *upakṣepa* comes right at the beginning of the first act, where Paurṇamāsī expresses the joy of her heart to her young disciple Gārgī³⁸⁵:

vatse gārgi śrūyatām –
 kṛṣṇāpāṅga-taraṅgita-dyumaṇija-sambheda-venī-kṛte
 rādhāyāḥ smīta-candrikā suradhunī-pūre nīpīyāmṛtam
 antas-toṣa-tuṣāra-samplava-lava-vyālīḍha-tāpocayā
 krāntāḥ sapta jaganti samprati vyaṁ sarvordhvam adhyāśmahe

Paurṇamāsī: Child Gārgī, listen. We drink the nectar of the overflowing celestial Ganges of the moonlight of Rādhā's smile, mixing with the Yamunā of Kṛṣṇa's sidelong glances, full of waves. In this confluence of Their meeting, we are overwhelmed by the cooling inner satisfaction which licks away the burning sensation of suffering. We have crossed all the worlds and stand in a supreme position. (LM, 1. 13)³⁸⁶

Next, Rūpa Gosvāmī defines the *parikara* (enlargement) as the phase where the *bīja* (the *anurāga* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) becomes magnified. The example is in the first act, a glorification of the potency of Kṛṣṇa's flute, by Gārgī:

hriyam avagṛhya grhebhyaḥ karṣati rādhāṁ vanāya yā nīpuṇā
 sā jayati nīṣṭāṛthā vara-vaṁśaja-kākalī dūtī

May the sweet sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, His authorized messenger, be glorified, for it expertly releases Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī from Her shyness and attracts Her from Her home to the forest. (LM, 1. 23)

The third *sandhyaṅga*, *parinyāsa* (establishment), is defined as the explicit and sure statement of the *bīja*, in this case the *anurāga* between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. In the first act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, Rādhikā, experiencing horripilation upon hearing about Lord Kṛṣṇa, says: "O Lalitā, what is this word Kṛṣṇa that I have just heard? Simply by becoming a guest in My ears, this word makes Me mad with bliss."

³⁸⁵ Gārgī is the daughter of Garga Ṛṣi, the famous astrologer who secretly performed the *nāma-karaṇa* ceremony for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in Vraja.

³⁸⁶ The numbering of the verses will follow the edition of Babulal Shukla Shastri (Varanasi, 1998), while the English wording is mostly inspired by the translation by Kuśākratha Prabhu (unpublished manuscript).

An example of *vilobhana* (allurement), which is a description of the qualities of the *nāyikā*, is the following statement of Kṛṣṇa to Rādhā:

*samīkṣya tava rādhike vadana-bimbam udbhāsuram
trapā-bhara-parīta-dhīḥ śrayitum asya tulya-śriyam
śaśi kila kṛṣṇi-bhavan suradhunī-taraṅgokṣitas
tapasyati kapardinaḥ sphuṭa-jaṭātavīm āśritaḥ*

Rādhā, embarrassed by seeing Your splendid face, the moon has entered the forest of Lord Śiva's matted hair, where it repeatedly bathes in the waves of the celestial Gaṅgā, and has become thin with austere fasting to become as beautiful as Your face. (LM, 1. 55)

The next *sandhyaṅga*, *yukti* (resolve), is defined as a statement of the supremacy of the desired goal. In the *Lalita-mādhava*, the example of *yukti* is in the words of Mother Yaśodā conversing with Rohiṇī and Paurṇamāsī, as she discloses to them her appreciation of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā: "O noble lady, Candrāvalī, Navamālikā, Rādhā and Mādhavī fulfill all my desires with the great flood of their good qualities. Nevertheless, one boy and one slender girl especially delight the bumblebee of my eyes with the honey of Their beauty." Paurṇamāsī adds: "O Queen of Gokula, all the people of Vraja feel in this way."

Prāpti (attainment), is the moment of being able to secure one's object of longing, in the case of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His meeting with Rādhā.

*madhurima-laharībhiḥ stambhayaty ambare yā
smara-mada-sarasānām sārāsānām rutāni
iyam udayati rādhā-kiṅkinī-jhaṅkṛtīr me
hṛdi pariṇamayanti vikriyā-ḍambarāṇi*

Moving through the air with waves of sweetness, the tinkling sound of Rādhā's ankle-bells silences the cooing of the *sarasa* birds, maddened with passion, and changes my heart with many transformations. (LM, 1. 51)

The next *sandhyaṅga*, *samādhāna* (settling), is the repetition of the *bīja* after it has become obscured by the plot. An example is Rādhā's tearful longing: "O Kundalatā, how is it that even though He has become a guest in My fortunate ears, He has never entered the path of My unfortunate eyes?"

An example of *vidhāna* (conflict of feelings), which is defined as a situation which causes both happiness and distress, is in the second act where Kṛṣṇa disguises Himself as the *pūjārī* and is employed by Jaṭilā in performing the worship of Sūrya. Attracted to the boy, She experiences joy, but doubts overcome Her about His identity, and cursing Herself for becoming attracted to a *brahmacārī* She wishes to enter fire. Then, analyzing Her feelings, She concludes that the boy must be Kṛṣṇa

in disguise for She is never attracted to anyone else. Her fluctuations in happiness and distress are called *vidhāna*.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *paribhāvanā* (surprise) is an effect of wonder achieved through a statement of the glorious virtues of the heroes. In the *Lalita-mādhava*, Rādhā says to Lalitā:

*kula-vara-tanu-dharma-grāva-vṛndāni bhindan
sumukhi niśita-dīrghāpāṅga-ṭaṅka-cchaṭābhiḥ
yugapad ayam apūrvah kaḥ puro viśvakarmā
marakata-maṇi-lakṣair goṣṭha-kakṣāṁ cinoti*

O beautiful-faced friend, who is this creative person standing before us? With the sharp chisels of His sidelong glances, He is splitting apart the hard stones of many women's righteous married life. He is simultaneously constructing many meeting places made of countless emeralds. (LM, 1. 51)

The *sandhyaṅga* called *udbheda* (disclosure) is an open revelation of the sprout of the theme. It appears in the second act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, in the words of Śrī Rādhā.

*calākṣi guru-lokataḥ sphurati tāvad antar-bhayaṁ
kula-sthitir alaṁ ca me manasi tāvad unmīlati
calan-makara-kuṇḍala-sphurita-phulla-gaṇḍa-sthalaṁ
na yāvad aparokṣatām idam upaiti vaktrāmbujam*

O restless-eyed friend, as long as Kṛṣṇa's lotus face with its blossoming cheeks decorated with the swaying earrings in the form of sharks, is not far away from My eyes, I am afraid of My superiors and worry about the reputation of My family. (LM, 2. 25)

The next *sandhyaṅga* is called *bheda* (division). It is used to again highlight the *bīja*, or to accentuate the difference between the characters. And example is from the second act, where Kundalatā jokingly blesses Rādhā that She will be able to stay composed at the sound of Lord Kṛṣṇa's flute. In this way, the *bīja* is again stressed, and Kundalatā humbly acknowledges her own inferior position.

The last *sandhyaṅga* of the *mukha-sandhi*, called *karaṇa* (resumption), is the engagement of the characters in activities which are their final goal. In the second act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, Kundalatā urges Rādhā to not be shy in entering the grove, and blesses Her that in the morning the *sakhīs* will sing of Her glories.

10. 3. 4. The *Pratimukha-sandhi*

The *pratimukha-sandhi* (expansion of action) binds together the *bindu* (drop) and the *yatna* (endeavor). It is spread through the third and the fourth act of the *Lalita-mādhava*. Its *sandhyaṅgas* are fourteen, called *vilāsa* (craving), *parisarpa* (pursuit), *vidhūta* (disinterest), *śama* (pacification), *narma* (joke), *narmadyuti* (amusement), *pragamana* (response), *virodha* (impediment), *paryupāsana* (apology), *puṣpa* (gallantry), *vajra* (bolt), *upanyāsa* (intimation or propitiation), and *varṇa-saṁhāra* (congregation).

Some theorists accept another *sandhyaṅga*, called *tāpana* (torment), but the group of theorists with whom Rūpa Gosvāmī agrees (*Dhanañjaya*, *Simha Bhūpāla*, *Śāradātanaya*) opine that it is not necessary, especially since it comes right after the element *vidhūta* (disinterest), which is itself an obstacle to the smooth development of action. They therefore prescribe *śama* (pacification) and not *tāpana* (torment) as the element coming after *vidhūta*.

In the *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, Rūpa Gosvāmī defines *vilāsa* as the activities leading to meeting. An example of it is within the *garbhāṅka*, the little play within the fourth act, where Kṛṣṇa says:

*akṣṇor bandhuṁ hari-haya-harīn-nāgarī rāga-riktāṁ
rāgeṇāviṣkuru guru-rucaṁ bhānavīyaṁ navīnāṁ
cakrābhikhyāḥ kim api vīrahād ākulaḥ kāku-lakṣaṁ
kurvan mukhyas tvayi sa vayasāṁ ārthi-bhāvaṁ tanoti*

I pray to you who are Her leading companion, begging with thousands of plaintive words, please lovingly bring before Me the friend of My eyes, the heroine golden like the sun, slightly reddish, splendidous youthful daughter of king Vṛṣabhānu. This *cakravāka* bird is distressed in separation from Her. (LM, 4. 22)

The next *sandhyaṅga*, called *parisarpa* (pursuit), is used to again foster remembrance of the *bīja*, which has become slightly overshadowed. In the fourth act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, we see Lord Kṛṣṇa lamenting at the death of Rādhikā, being tormented by the difficult hope of meeting Her again.

*nīre maṅkṣu mimankṣum ārta-mukharāṁ uddiśya caṇḍa-dyuter
dūrān maṇḍalataḥ kṛpāturatayā yat prādurāsīt tadā
hā dhig vāg-amṛtena tena janitas tasyāḥ punaḥ saṅgama-
pratyaśāṅkura uccakair mama sakhe svāntaṁ haṭhād vidhyati*

Friend, I am now tortured by hope. When suffering Mukharā was about to drown herself, a voice from the distant, effulgent Sun planet mercifully told her [that Rādhā is there]. Alas! The nectar of that message has now sprouted a single grass-blade of

hope that I may indeed see Her again. This hope now pierces My heart violently. (LM, 4. 10)

The next element of the *pratimukha-sandhi*, *vidhūta* (disinterest), is either a distress at not being able to attain one's objective, or an instance of ignoring a humble supplication. The illustration is from the third act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, where Rādhā laments that She did not forgive Śrī Kṛṣṇa and accept Him back, while it is now suddenly too late as He is leaving Vṛndāvana.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *śama* (pacification) occurs when sufferings or disturbances subside. An example is within the *garbhāṅka* in the fourth act, after Rādhā is taken away by Jaṭilā. Vṛndā pacifies Kṛṣṇa that she will employ her parrots in pursuing His cause.

Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions that some theorists speak of *tāpāna* (torment) as another *sandhyaṅga* of the *pratimukha-sandhi*, which is defined as suffering when no solution seems to be at hand. An example is in the third act:

Vṛndā: Alas! Alas! Look! Look! Viśākhā and the other *gopī* friends of Rādhārāṇī cannot bear to either tell Her or not tell Her the news of Kṛṣṇa's imminent departure for Mathurā. They are all completely stunned. They stand together, ear to ear, as if they have lost all sense. (LM, 3. 12)

A *narma* (joke) is of course a humorous statement. An example is in the fourth act, within the little play, where Jaṭilā intrudes into the scene, sarcastically asking Kṛṣṇa: "O rascal snake biting the girls of Gokula, whom do you plan to bite today?" And Kṛṣṇa angrily answers: "You, o fat-lipped witch of Gokula!"

A similar element, called *narmadyuti* (amusement) is an expanded form of fun caused by humorous statements. An example is Lalitā teasing Rādhā, curious of the intimate affairs of the Divine couple.

The next *sandhyaṅga* is called *pragamana* (response). A traditional explanation of this element is that it is a series of smart replies, called an *uttarottara-vākya*. The illustration is from the third act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, in a frenzied conversation of Rādhā and Lalitā, as they see Kṛṣṇa leaving Vṛndāvana.

Rādhā: Now that I see the prince of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa, standing on the chariot with His brother, My body trembles. Why does the earth move here and there, and why are the *kadamba* trees dancing?

Lalitā: Kṛṣṇa is simply traveling around Govardhana Hill. O friend Rādhā, please do not lament.

Rādhā: Now I know everything. My friend, what will you cleverly hide from Me? Wretched girl, stop! I will not be unhappy when Kṛṣṇa is gone. Why does this shameless breathing move again and again in My throat?

The *sandhyaṅga* called *virodha* (impediment) is used in situations where the heroes are momentarily covered with the appearance of obstacles. An example of such impediment is from the third act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, where Rādhā laments: "My friends the *gopīs* may be convinced that Kṛṣṇa's heart is flooded with waves of compassion for this downtrodden person. Still, My cruel enemy, the pain of being separated from Him, is intent on cutting My heart to pieces. That enemy does not allow me to celebrate the festival of My good fortune." (LM, 3. 27)

The *sandhyaṅga* called *paryupāsana* (apology) is an attempt to pacify an angry person with humble supplications. An example given is from the fourth act, from the *garbhāṅka*, where Lalitā tries to pacify the angry Jaṭilā.

The next element of the *pratimukha-sandhi* is called *puṣpa* (gallantry). It consists of two successive statements of appreciation (usually of the hero by the heroine), where one of them is the actual description, and the other an apparition or an imagined glimpse of him. In the third act, Rādhā is stunned to see the dark-complexioned Kṛṣṇa, beautified with a peacock feather, being embraced by fair-bodied *gopīs*. Looking again, She realizes She was deceived, and that She only saw a rainbow, lightning and a raincloud resting simultaneously on Govardhana Hill. (LM, 3. 40)

Vajra (bolt) is a direct cruel statement. Its example is from the fourth act, from the *garbhāṅka*, where Jaṭilā attacks her own son from behind, screaming, "O you rascal who disturb the young girls of Gokula! You think that Jaṭilā will accept You as her son as well?!"

The next *sandhyaṅga* is called *upanyāsa* (intimation or propitiation), where through many connivances, a certain outsider is pacified or stopped from harming the heroes. An example is from the third act, where Lalitā successfully prevents Mukharā from intruding and disturbing Rādhikā while She experiences the excruciating pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa. Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions that *upanyāsa* can also be explained as making someone happy, the example of which is the end of the fourth act, where, at the conclusion of the *garbhāṅka*, Jaṭilā happily allows Rādhā to stay in the forest with Her husband, who is actually Kṛṣṇa disguised as Abhimanyu.

The last of the *sandhyaṅgas* of the *pratimukha-sandhi* is called *varṇa-saṁhāra* (congregation of all *varṇas*). The *varṇas* here mean the four divisions of society, and an example of such a gathering is the description of the wrestling arena by Uddhava, at the beginning of the fourth act. This concludes our treatment of the *pratimukha-sandhi*, and we move to the next.

10. 3. 5. The Garbha-sandhi

The *garbha-sandhi* (development of action) combines the *patākā* (episode) and the *prāpy-āśā* (prospect of success), and consists of twelve *sandhyaṅgas*, called *abhūtāharaṇa* (mis-statement), *mārga* (indication), *rūpa* (reflection), *udāharaṇa* (exaggeration), *krama* (progress), *sangraha* (propitiation), *anumāna* (inference), *toṭaka* (quarrel), *adhibala* (outwitting), *udvega* (dismay), *sambhrama* (terror) and *ākṣepa* (revelation). The *garbha-sandhi* spreads over the fifth and sixth acts of the *Lalita-mādhava*, where the plot begins to unravel towards the final happy end, through the discovery of Candrāvalī as Rukmiṇī and the meeting with Lalitā (Jāmbavatī), although the final aim is occasionally covered with the subsidiary episodes.

Rūpa Gosvāmī defines *abhūtāharaṇa* (mis-statement) as a statement full of deception, or a revelation of a stratagem to obtain the final goal. The example is from the fifth act where we hear of Rukmī propitiating goddess Candrabhāgā to bless his sister Rukmiṇī's marriage with Śīsupāla. The goddess answered his prayers, seemingly fulfilling his desire, while in fact alluding to the fact that Rukmiṇī will be married to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The second *sandhyaṅga*, called *mārga* (indication), is exemplified in Kṛṣṇa's answer to Rukmiṇī's letter where he reveals the state of His heart, admitting that He is only attracted to the birds of Vṛndāvana.

The next element, known as *rūpa* (reflection) is a statement of astonished reasoning. An example of it is Kṛṣṇa's response to the sound of Candrāvalī's ankle bells, which sound familiar to Him and melt His heart.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *udāharaṇa* (exaggeration) is an elated statement of glorification. Its example within the *Lalita-mādhava* is the eloquent praise of Candrāvalī's beauty by Garuḍa, which, however, fails to enchant Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The next *sandhyaṅga*, *krama* (progress), is the move from mere feelings to their outer expression. An example in the sixth act is the statement of Nava-vṛndā, as she observes how Rādhā becomes overwhelmed at the sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa's yellow dress: "As Rādhā gazes for a long time at Lord Kṛṣṇa's splendid golden garment, She anxiously struggles to conceal the ecstatic love awakening in Her heart." (LM, 6. 25)

The element called *sangraha* (propitiation) is either a verbal supplication or a bestowal of gifts in order to please someone. The example is at the end of the fifth act, as Rukmiṇī is about to be married to Kṛṣṇa. Her father Bhīṣmaka expresses his joy, saying, "Jāmbavān has really done me a great favor by bringing my daughter back from a distant place. Now You, the Supreme Lord, whose lotus feet the great sages put into their hearts, will accept the hand of my daughter in marriage." Such kind words, along with the *kanyā-dāna*, are known as the *sangraha*.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *anumāna* (inference) is used when the characters guess the inner feelings of each other and infer the whole truth from mere signs. In the sixth

act Rukmiṇī, just by observing Satyabhāmā, is able to guess that the lady seems to be in love with Lord Kṛṣṇa and separated from Him.

*sādharmyaṁ madhu-riṇu-viprayoga-bhājāṁ
tanv-aṅgī muhur iyaṁ aṅgakais tanoti
prakṛtyaḥ priya-sakhi mādhurīm kim etām
dainye 'pi prathayitum ārtayaḥ kṣamante*

O dear friend, this slender girl show signs of conditions similar to those who are affected with separation from Lord Kṛṣṇa. How do even Her sufferings increase the natural sweet beauty of this aggrieved girl? (LM, 6. 23)

The next *sandhyaṅga* is called *toṭaka* (quarrel). It is an angry, upset statement, exemplified in the words of Nārada to king Satrājit, who refuses to part with the *syamantaka* jewel. "A lion will kill your brother Prasena and take away the jewel. Jāmbavān, the king of bears, will then defeat the powerful lion. Eventually, the supremely independent Kṛṣṇa will take your valuable jewel. O Satrājit, you are sinful. You will drown in an ocean of suffering." (LM, 6. 16)

The *sandhyaṅga* named *adhibala* (outwitting) is achieving one's objective through trickery. An example of it is in the fifth act, where Kṛṣṇa, dressed as a dancer, enters Kuṇḍina city, happily observing that the *gopa-veśa* of His youth has served Him well.

The next element, called *udvega* (dismay) is a profound positive disturbance of the mind, illustrated in the fifth act where Candrāvalī recognizes her Lord and master embracing her.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *sambhrama* (terror) is seen when the characters are affected with fear due to the presence of enemies, fierce animals and so on. An example of such terror is seen at the end of the fifth act, immediately after the kidnapping of Rukmiṇī. The deceived Śiśupāla shouts:

*saptis saptī ratha iha rathaḥ kuñjaraḥ kuñjaro me
tūṇas tūṇo dhanur uta dhanur bhoḥ kṛpāṇī kṛpāṇī
kā bhīḥ kā bhīr ayam ayam ahaṁ hā tvaradhvaṁ tvaradhvaṁ
rājñāḥ putrī bata hṛta-hṛtā kāmīnā ballavena*

Horses! Horses! Chariots! Here, chariots! My elephant, elephant! My quiver! My quiver! The bow, the bow! Oh! The sword! The sword! What a calamity! A calamity! This, this, I, alas! Hurry, hurry! The princess was kid... kidnapped by that greedy cowherd! (LM, 5. 40)

The last element of the *garbha-sandhi* is called *ākṣepa* (revelation). It is a renewed blossoming of the *bīja* which had been covered for a while. An example of *ākṣepa* is in the statement of Lord Kṛṣṇa towards the end of the sixth act, where He admits to Madhumaṅgala: "As I was busy pleasing My friends, the fire of separation from

Rādhikā remained subdued and peaceful, but now that I see Lalitā's intense love for Her, that fire has suddenly become a great conflagration." (LM, 6. 43)

10. 3. 6. The *Vimarśa-sandhi*

The *vimarśa-sandhi* (pause) connects the *prakarī* (incident) and the *niyatāpti* (certainty of success), and has got sixteen *sandhyaṅgas*, known as *avavāda* (censure), *sampheta* (rebuke), *vidrava* (tumult), *drava* (contempt), *śakti* (placating), *dyuti* (excitement), *prasaṅga* (reference), *chalana* (disrespect), *vyavasāya* (assertion), *virodhana* (opposition), *prarocanā* (precursion), *vivalana* (praise), *ādāna* (summary), *kheda* (dejection), *pratiśedha* (prevention) and *chādana* (forbearance). The *vimarśa-sandhi* spreads through the seventh and eighth act of the *Lalita-mādhava*.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *avavāda* (censure) is a verbal expression of frustration due to a fault or a certain evil. In the seventh act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, Nava-vṛndā tells Rādhā that she heard Her speaking in Her dreams, lamenting about the departure of the Lord to Mathurā. Rādhā answers: "After a long struggle, Lord Kṛṣṇa again entered the courtyard of My eyes on the pretext of a dream. How did the cruel Akrūra come there so quickly on his chariot?" (LM, 7. 22)

An example of *sampheta* (rebuke) is in the angry words of Śrī Rādhā, as She resists the allurements of the ladies in Dvārakā who tell Her of the astonishing king of their city.

śāstu dvāravatī-patis tri-jagatīm saundarya-paryācitāḥ
kin nas tena vīramyatām katham asau śokāgnir ujjvālyate³⁸⁷
yuṣmābhiḥ sphuṭa-yukti-koṭi-garima-vyāhāriṇibhir balād
ākraṣṭum vraja-rāja-nandana-padāmbhojān na śakyā vayam

Let your king of Dvārakā rule the three worlds, and He may also be extremely handsome. What is He to us? Please stop. Why do you deliberately ignite the fire of My sorrow? Even with the strength of millions of clever arguments you will never be able to forcibly pull us away from the lotus feet of the prince of Vraja. (LM, 7. 2)

The next *sandhyaṅga*, called *vidrava* (tumult) is a reference to a commotion of fighting, seizing, and similar situations. An example is the Lord's description of His fetching the *sura-saugandhika* lotuses from the Khāṇḍava forest, where He saw two birds being taken away by two eagles. The birds were lamenting that they will not be able to take part in the sacrifices meant to please Rādhā. This revelation leads Kṛṣṇa on to the lake in the forest where He meets Viśākhā.

The element of *drava* (contempt) is found in statements of disrespect for superiors. In the *Lalita-mādhava*, this category of speech is exemplified in the statements of the

³⁸⁷ The alternative reading is *śāpāgni*, i. e. 'why do you ignite the fire of My curse upon you'.

servants of Rukmiṇī, who express their love for their Queen through minimizing the glory of Satyabhāmā.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *śakti* (placating) is the pacification of a calamity or adverse circumstances. In the eighth act, Vṛndā helps Kṛṣṇa understand that He is speaking to Rukmiṇī who has dressed herself as Rādhā, and so saves Him from exclamations of love for Rādhā in the wrong situation.

The next element, called *dyuti* (excitement) is a chastisement directed towards the source of a disturbance. In the *Lalita-mādhava*, Rādhā playfully chides a bumblebee for disturbing Her.

The element *prasaṅga* (reference) is a statement of the final aim, somewhat pacified. An example of *prasaṅga* is Kṛṣṇa's statement at the beginning of the eighth act, where He laments His painful separation from Rādhā, and ends with an exclamation: "One day, will My Rādhā unexpectedly come here and surprise Me with an embrace?" (LM, 8. 3)

An example of *chalana* (disrespect) are the angry words of Kṛṣṇa towards Mādhavi when He sees her spoiling the mind of queen Rukmiṇī with baseless doubts.

The next *sandhyaṅga*, called *vyavasāya* (assertion) is a statement of one's qualification or ability. Rādhā, lamenting about Her fate, says: "O friend, without the auspicious sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa, I have no love for this unfortunate, wretched life. Without Him I will no longer continue to remain alive. If these cruel chains of hope did not bind Me, I would have given up billions of such lives." (LM, 7. 13)

Virodhana (opposition) is an exchange of hostile speech between two opposing parties. An example of such speech is at the end of the eighth act, where Rukmiṇī jealously attacks Satyabhāmā, and Satyabhāmā tries to pacify the Queen by begging her to be merciful to her dependents.

The next element is called *prarocanā* (precursion). It gives an indirect prediction about the fulfillment of desires. In the seventh act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, Nava-vṛndā pacifies the despondent Rādhā, through an allusion to *khañjana* birds sporting in pairs on the banks of the lakes:

*alam vilāpaiḥ samaya-kramasya durūha-rūpā gatayo bhavanti
śaran-mukhe paśya saras-taṭīṣu khelanty akasmāt khalu khañjaritāḥ*

Enough of lamentation! The movements of time are very difficult to understand. Look! Now that autumn has come, the *khañjana* birds suddenly started playing on the banks of the lakes." (LM, 7. 5)

The element called *vivalana* (praise) is a statement of self-glorification. In the eighth act, Lord Kṛṣṇa sees His own reflection on a jeweled wall, and is attracted to it. Surprised, He realizes He is looking at Himself.

aparikalita-pūrvah kaś camatkāra-kāri

sphurati mama garīyān eṣa mādhyura-pūrah
ayam aham api hanta prekṣya yaṁ labdha-cetāḥ
sarabhasam upabhoktum kāmāye rādhikeva

Who manifests an abundance of sweetness greater than Mine, which has never been experienced before, and which causes wonder to all? Alas, I Myself, My mind bewildered upon seeing this beauty, impetuously desire to enjoy it like Rādhikā. (LM, 8. 34)

The element *ādāna* (summary) is an early statement of the final goal, exemplified in the words of Nava-vṛndā, witnessing the meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the eighth act. “Ah! Ah! Her eyes filled with tears, She is not able to see the lotus-eyed Lord Kṛṣṇa. The vines of Her arms completely stunned, She has no power to embrace Him. Her voice choked-up, She cannot speak. Although doe-eyed Rādhā has finally met Her beloved Kṛṣṇa after a very long time, these obstacles still remain to separate Her from Him.” (LM, 8. 11)

The *sandhyaṅga* called *kheda* (dejection) is an exhaustion of the mind and the body. An example of such despondency is the speech of Rādhā at the beginning of the seventh act, “The directions of the sky which are decorated with the smell of Lord Kṛṣṇa are now far away from Me. In this depression, a moment has become like a millennium. The wicked burning ghee of hope has set My life on fire. What should I do, alas, who could help Me?” (LM, 7. 1)

An example of *pratiṣedha* (prevention), which is a situation where the attainment of the desired objective is thwarted by outer circumstances, is Rādhā’s grief at the arrival of the Queen, who interrupts Her meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The last *sandhyaṅga* of the *vimarśa-sandhi* is called *chādana* (forbearance). It refers to tolerating insults and difficulties that surface along with the effort to attain the final goal. An example of such forbearance are the words of Nava-vṛndā, encouraging Rādhā to understand Her present difficulty as a way to advance to the goal: “Friend Satyabhāmā, do not lament. Look! Look! This *mādhavī* vine first falls at the feet of this *badarī* bush and then, resting on that bush climbs to embrace her lover, the mango tree. A chaste woman whose heart is determined to meet the Lord of her life will not find it painful to be dependent on someone else in the course of attaining her goal.” (LM, 7. 3)

10. 3. 7. The *Nirvahaṇa-sandhi*

The *nirvahaṇa-sandhi* (the final juncture) wraps up the dramatic action and combines the *phalāgama* (consummation) with the *kārya* (dénouement), in the case of the *Lalita-mādhava*, the meeting of all the lost *gopīs* and their marriage with Śrī

Kṛṣṇa. Spreading through the last two acts of the *Lalita-mādhava*, the *nirvahaṇa-sandhi* consists of fourteen *sandhyaṅgas*, known as *sandhi* (junction), *vibodha* (vigilance), *granthana* (hint), *nirṇaya* (narration), *paribhāṣaṇa* (conversation), *prasāda* (graciousness), *ānanda* (bliss), *samaya* (deliverance), *kṛti* (consolation), *bhūṣaṇa* (satisfaction), *upagūhana* (surprise), *pūrvabhāva* (anticipation), *upasaṁhāra* (termination) and *praśasti* (benediction). The dramatic theorists agree that practically all of these elements are necessary in the *nirvahaṇa-sandhi* for a successful conclusion of the drama, but their sequence can be adjusted.

The first of the *sandhyaṅgas*, called *sandhi* (junction), is the first dawn of the happy conclusion. In the ninth act, the meeting of Rādhā and Mādhava is an example of such a junction.

The element called *virodha* or *mārga* (vigilance) is a description of approaching the goal. In the ninth act, we hear from Nava-vṛndā: "Learning that Queen Rukmiṇī was for a moment unattended by her servants, Lord Kṛṣṇa approached her, pleased her with many charming pastimes, and when a smile blossomed on her charming face, asked, 'Lord Brahmā has invited Me to visit Satyaloka. My Queen, I wish to go there. Please give Me your permission.'" (LM, 9. 7-8)

The next *sandhyaṅga*, *granthana* (hint), is the beginning stage of the final success. An example of *granthana* is Rādhikā's speech in the ninth act:

*añjali-mātram salilam śapharyā abhilaṣantyā
upari svayaṁ nava-jala-do dhārā-vārṣī samullasati*

This little fish was only desiring a handful of water, but from above, a new raincloud now showers streams upon her. (LM, 9. 19)

Nirṇaya (narration) is a description of one's past experience. Examples of such narrations abound in the ninth act, during the *citra-darśana*, watching the pictures of Their past *līlās*.

An element *paribhāṣaṇa* (conversation) is a dialogue or an argument, visible in the ninth act between Madhumaṅgala and Sukaṇṭhī.

Madhumaṅgala: Why have you come, lady?

Sukaṇṭhī: To hear sweet answers to questions such as this one.

Madhumaṅgala: Have you heard the answer?

Sukaṇṭhī: Not only that.

Madhumaṅgala: Then what more?

Sukaṇṭhī: Whatever I have seen, I will tell the Queen.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *prasāda* (graciousness) is the satisfaction of the hero, brought about by his success. In the ninth act, Kṛṣṇa congratulates Sukaṇṭhī and adds that it is very difficult for Him to properly repay her for her service of bringing Him to meet Rādhā.

A similar situation is called *ānanda* (bliss), which is defined as the joy of the attainment of the desired goal. In the tenth act, Yaśodā's meeting with her son is an example of mutual *ānanda*.

The next element, called *samaya* (deliverance), and defined by Rūpa Gosvāmī as the destruction of sorrow, is exemplified in the tenth act, when Satyabhāmā – Rādhā recognizes Lalitā, Paurṇamāsī and Mukharā, and falls to the ground overwhelmed by joy.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *kṛti* (consolation) is firm faith, appearing towards the end of the drama, that the goal will eventually be accomplished. Its example is in the tenth act when Rukmiṇī offers the hand of her sister Rādhā in marriage to Kṛṣṇa.

The next element of the last sandhi is called *bhāṣaṇa* (satisfaction). It is a positive pride arising from the fulfillment of desires. In the tenth act of the *Lalita-mādhava*, Nanda Mahārāja amply blesses the two girls, Rādhā and Candrāvalī.

Upagūhana (surprise) is the attainment of something wonderful. In the tenth act, the final recognition of the two sisters is an example of it.

The *sandhyaṅga* called *pūrvabhāva* (anticipation) is the bud of the final dénouement, exemplified in the tenth act, as Paurṇamāsī announces the marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā, and subsequently all other *gopīs*.

The final element of the play, called *upasaṁhāra* (termination) is the final conclusion of all activity and the attainment of all desired objectives. At the end of the tenth act, Kṛṣṇa asks Rādhā: "Dear Rādhā, dearer to Me than life, please order Me, what else can I do to please You?" Rādhā answers:

sakhyas tā militā nisarga-madhura-premābhirāmī-kṛtā
yāmiyām samagamṣta saṁstavavatī śvaśruś ca goṣṭheśvarī
vṛndāraṇya-nikuṇja-dhāmni bhavatā saṅgo 'py ayaṁ raṅgavān
samvṛttaḥ kim ataḥ paraṁ priyataraṁ kartavyam atrāsti me

In this abode of the groves of Vṛndāvana, I have found My sweet, loving, charming *gopī* friends, and I have found My sister Candrāvalī, accompanied with her friends. I have attained the Queen of Gokula as My mother-in-law and I have been blessed with Your blissful company. What more and what dearer to me could I still hope to attain? (LM, 10. 36)

The final conclusion of the play is the *praśasti* (benediction), in the *Lalita-mādhava* spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhā, praying that the devotees, whose love for the Lord of Vraja made them live in Vraja for a long time, be blessed with friendship to

Him, and attain His association. She also prays that the Lord of Her life would always perform transcendental loving pastimes in Vraja with the *gopīs* who are full of love for Him.

Rūpa Gosvāmī continues the *Nāṭaka-candrikā* with the descriptions of the *nāṭaka-bhūṣaṇas* and *sandhyantarās*, additional elements and qualities of the drama. Let the above suffice for an overview.

10. 4. *The Yoga of Sorrow*

Let us now enter the discussion on the experience of sorrow, either in a drama or in one's own relation to the Lord. As soon as one defines the experience of *rasa* as an example of otherworldly bliss, happiness or joy, the question comes up about the apparently sorrowful *rasas*, like the experience of *vipralambha* within *śṛṅgāra*, or the *karuṇa-rasa* in its entirety. Is the original character, who experiences suffering, at the same time joyful? Is the actor joyful by internalizing and relishing *karuṇa-rasa*? Is the audience happy to experience *karuṇa-rasa*? And especially in relation to the devotional drama, do the readers or spectators enjoy or suffer when they experience the pangs of separation, brought about by the presentation of the suffering of the *Vraja-vāsīs*?

This question has been bothering classical *rasa* theorists for ages. Viśvanātha Kavirāja was vocal about the extraordinary experience of *rasa*, and many seem to agree with his common sense. In the third *pariccheda* of the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, immediately after the statements about the nature of *rasa* as '*lokottara-camatkāra*' and so on, he turns to the experience of *rasas* such as sorrow, disgust and fear, and answers the doubts of those who deny the experience of joy in them:

karuṇādāv api rase jāyate yat param sukham
sacetasām anubhavaḥ pramāṇam tatra kevalam
kiṁ ca teṣu yadā duḥkham na ko 'pi syād tad-unmukhaḥ
tathā rāmāyaṇādīnām bhavitā duḥkha-hetutā
hetutvaṁ śoka-harṣāder gatebhyo loka-saṁśrayāt
śoka-harṣādayo loka jāyantām nāma laukikāḥ
alaukika-vibhāvatvaṁ prāpteḥbhyāḥ kāvya-saṁśrayāt
sukham saṁjāyate tebhyāḥ sarvebhyo 'piti kā kṣatīḥ

Supreme joy manifests even in *rasas* like *karuṇa*, *bībhatsa* and *bhayānaka*, and the sole proof for this truth is the experience of sensitive connoisseurs. Even if we agree that there is sorrow in these *rasas*, we see that no one turns away from tasting them [which is natural in real life]. If these *rasas* are understood as of a sorrowful nature, then *Rāmāyaṇa* and other works where *karuṇa* predominates would be sources of sorrow.

Experiences in the world such as joy and sorrow are mundane and based in the world, but these same experiences, when they are represented in *kāvya*, attain an otherworldly nature and they all produce joy. What is the harm in accepting this logic? (*Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 4-8)

Rūpa Gosvāmī also accepts the otherworldly nature of *rasa*, but due to the special nature of *bhagavad-bhakti-rasa*, his answer to this challenge takes a slightly different turn:

*kṛṣṇānvayād guṇātīta- prauḍhānanda-mayā api
bhānty amī triḡuṇotpanna- sukha-duḥkha-mayā iva*

Since all the *bhakti-rasas* are associated with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they completely transcend the three ordinary qualities of existence (*guṇas*) and consist of abundant joy (*ānanda*). Nevertheless, they appear as if they consist of the happiness and sorrow that is produced from the three ordinary qualities of existence. (BRS, 2. 5. 75)

Jīva Gosvāmī elaborates in the commentary to this verse that since the Lord Himself consists of joy and transcends the three ordinary qualities of existence (as stated in Bhāg. 11. 25. 24), so do all emotions associated with Him. How then can sorrowful emotions, such as grief, be associated with Kṛṣṇa? Jīva Gosvāmī answers by explaining that joy underlies all the devotional sentiments, but to enhance the joy of reunion, the devotees must experience the deep sorrow in separation from Him. Even though these emotions are experienced as sorrowful, actually, as ingredients of the drama of love they are really forms of joy. This argument is amply supported by the development of the plot in the *Lalita-mādhava*, with its supremely pacifying happy end. Rūpa Gosvāmī specifies:

*prāyaḥ sukha-mayāḥ śītā uṣṇā duḥkha-mayā iha
citreyam paramānanda- sāndrāpy uṣṇā ratir matā
śītair bhāvair baliṣṭhais tu puṣṭā śītāyate hy asau
uṣṇais tu ratir aty uṣṇā tāpayantīva bhāsate
vipralambhe tato duḥkha- bharābhāsa-kṛd ucyate*

Happy emotions are generally cool and the sad emotions are generally hot. What is amazing here is that even though love is a concentration of the highest joy (*paramānanda*), it can still appear to be hot.

When nourished by powerful cool emotions it becomes cooling, but when nourished by hot emotions it appears very hot, as if it were heating. Therefore, in separation it is called the semblance of the burden of sorrow (*duḥkha-bharābhāsa*). (BRS. 2.5.78)

Rūpa Gosvāmī concludes the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga* with a consideration on the nature of joy experienced in *rasa*, even if the *rasa* is apparently sorrowful.

akhaṇḍa-sukha-rūpatve 'py eṣām asti kvacit kvacit

raseṣu gahanāsvāda- viśeṣaḥ ko 'py anuttamaḥ
pratīyamāna apy ajñair grāmyaiḥ sapadi duḥkhavat
karuṇādyā rasāḥ prājñaiḥ prauḍhānanda-mayā matāḥ
alaukika-vibhāvatvaṁ nītebhyo rati-līlayā
saduktyā ca sukhaṁ tebhyaḥ syāt suvyaktam iti sthitiḥ
tathā ca nāṭyāḍau –
karuṇādāv api rase jāyate yat paraṁ sukhaṁ
*sacetasām anubhavaḥ pramāṇaṁ tatra kevalam*³⁸⁸

Even though all the *rasas* are of a nature that is entirely pleasurable, from time to time there is an inexplicable kind of special experience in the *rasas*. Even though such *rasas* as compassion strike the ignorant and uneducated as sorrowful, the cultured know them truly to consist of abundant joy (*ānanda*). It is well established that happiness can clearly result from such *rasas* as compassion when by the play of love and by the instruction of the wise the extraordinary (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) becomes the excitant. Like it is said in the dramatic literature: That even a *rasa* like compassion can produce supreme happiness needs no other proof than the fact that the intelligent experience it as such. (BRS, 2. 5. 122-125)

Just as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is traditionally honored as the establisher of the path, or rather the pointer to the perfectional states of *bhakti*, so Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is revered as the ideal example of showing the attainment of these perfectional states. This philosophical relation between the two outstanding Gosvāmīs is enhanced by their mutual appreciation and deep friendship, often surfacing in the works of both of them. For example, Rūpa Gosvāmī concludes each of the four *vibhāgas* of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* with a similar prayer. The quote below is from the end of the *dakṣiṇa-vibhāga*.

gopāla-rūpa-śobhāṁ dadhad raghunātha-bhāva-vistārī
tuṣyatu sanātanaṭmā dakṣiṇa-vibhāge sudhāmbhu-nidheḥ

May the eternal Lord who manifested the beautiful form of Gopāla and who expanded the *bhāvas* of Raghunātha [Rāma], be pleased with the southern section of the ocean of nectar.

Or, May Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who nourishes the glory of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī and Rūpa Gosvāmī, and who distributes the *prema* of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, be pleased with the southern section of the ocean of nectar. (BRS, 2. 5. 134)

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, the dear and humble companion of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, often reverentially mentions his friendship and indebtedness to them in his works.

vairāgya-yug-bhakti-rasaṁ prayatnair

³⁸⁸ This is a quotation from the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, 3. 4, mentioned above as well.

*apāyayan mām anabhīpsum andham
kṛpāmbudhir yaḥ para-duḥkha-duḥkhī
sanātanas taṁ prabhum āśrayāmi*

I was blind and unwilling to drink the nectar of devotional service characterized by renunciation, but Sanātana Gosvāmī, out of his causeless mercy made me drink it. Therefore he is an ocean of mercy. I take shelter of him, who is very compassionate to fallen souls like me. (*Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, verse 6)

The famous introductory verse of the same collection of verses gives us a picture of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and the success of her spiritual engagement in Goloka.

*tvaṁ rūpa-mañjarī sakhi prathitā pure 'smīn
pūṁsaḥ parasya vadanam na hi paśyasīti
bimbādhare kṣatam anāgata-bhartṛkāyā
yat te vyadhāyi kim u tac chuka-puṅgavena*

O friend Rūpa-mañjarī, you are famous in this town for never even looking at the face of another man. Your husband is not here, and yet there is a mark on the *bimba* fruits of your lips as if someone has bitten them. Did a great parrot (*śuka-puṅgava*) bite them? (*Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, verse 1)

Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's mellifluous poetry is known for its passionate devotion, and the transcendent restlessness of his pure mind at the prospect of attaining his cherished desires. The following verse summarizes his agony:

*āśā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayāti-gamitaḥ kila sāmprataṁ hi
tvaṁ cet kṛpām mayi vidhāyasi naiva kim me
prāṇair vrajena ca varoru bakāriṇāpi*

O Rādhā, my time has somehow passed in firm hopes, full of oceans of nectar. If You do not give me Your mercy, then of what use are to me this life, the land of Vraja, and even Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself? (*Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, verse 102)

Tradition informs us that Rūpa Gosvāmī gave the *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka* to his friend Raghunātha as a gift, but his enraptured response to the book was so intense that Rūpa Gosvāmī swiftly wrote another work to pacify him. The deep sorrow, prompted by descriptions of *vipralambha*, which Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī experienced day and night, made Rūpa Gosvāmī decide to write a happier work, his famous *bhāṇikā*, the *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, a merry comedy of jests exchanged between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* at the serious toll station of king Cupid at Govardhana Hill.

Madhumaṅgala: Lalitā, it is not right for us to take a toll from you today. Your delicate waists must be about to break by carrying from early morning this heavy burden of butter. Now you have come to this toll-station. Therefore you may now go with pleasure after giving a small token payment just to spare us from being accused of being negligent in our work.

Viśākhā: Ha! Never before have I seen a toll-station by Govardhana Hill.

Kṛṣṇa: Viśākhā, you speak the truth. How can persons like you see this toll-station? Even as you look at it you claim that you cannot see it.

Lalitā: (*aside*) Friends, first we should try to pacify them.

All the girls: What you say is right.

Lalitā: O bliss of Gokula, it is not right for a glorious person like You, a person who is the crown of all good people, to be hostile to persons like us, persons pure and saintly by nature, persons who live in the same town with You. Therefore please let us go at once.

Kṛṣṇa: (*sympathetic*) O delicate girl, I am shackled by the order of the forest king, whose orders may not be disobeyed. By his order I do this cruel work of collecting tolls. I am not independent. What can I do?

Viśākhā: Are You ordered by Kāṁsa?

Kṛṣṇa: No. No.

Viśākhā: By whom, then?

Kṛṣṇa: By the person whose sidelong glance makes Kāṁsa and a host of others tremble, by He who bears the name 'Kāmadeva'.

Lalitā: Ha! I never heard of any king that bears the name 'Kāmadeva'.

Madhumaṅgala: (*loudly laughing*) Ha! Ha! Wonderful! Wonderful! They never heard of the mighty Kāmadeva, whose hillside capital city bears the name 'The Blossom of Delight', whose council of ministers includes Madhumaṅgala, Subala, Vijaya, and a host of others, and whose pastime place is a host of glorious gardens!

Kṛṣṇa: What more need be said? The deer, bees, and cuckoos are all his messengers.

Campakalatā: (*laughing uproariously*) Lalitā, don't be angry with the prince of Vraja, even if He will not excuse this toll, for the spies of the king of thieves walk everywhere.

Kṛṣṇa: Lalitā, you know what is right. Put down your pots, and We will settle this toll.

Viśākhā: Fascinating boy, to stay at a toll station for even a single sesame seed's worth of time is a great suffering for saintly girls born in good families.

Citrā: (*politely*) O bliss of Gokula, please hear the truth. If a toll of even a single coin is paid for it, butter meant for a *yajña* at once becomes impure. This we have heard in the Vedas. Otherwise we would not mind paying five copper coins.

Lalitā: Friend Rādhā, This heavy burden must trouble You. Set down Your pot for half an hour.

(*all the girls set down their pots*)

Kṛṣṇa: Friend Subala, Lalitā and her friends are the first guests today at our toll-station. Therefore it is right to honor them with five gifts of betel nuts.

Subala: (*opening a jewelled box*) Lalitā, please take five betels. (*He places the box before her*)

Viśākhā: Subala, of what use are betels to us? We have already said that we are following a vow.

Lalitā: Subala, why do you stare at my face? Viśākhā does not trust you. She angrily said to me: 'These toll collectors use drugs to make their victims fall asleep. I heard they are infamous for that.' What is the use of these betel leaves?

Madhumāṅgala: Of what use are these betel leaves to your *bimba*-fruit lips! Blessed be you. You have saved us five betel leaves. (*Dāna-keli-kaumudī*)³⁸⁹

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's ideal response to the *Lalita-mādhava* and the expressions of *vipralambha* within it has been the guiding light of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* devotees for centuries, and all who have been blessed with the gift of Rūpa Gosvāmī's dramas in their hands have tried to emulate the depth of feeling so natural to the Gosvāmīs. The *Mathurā-maṇḍala-parikramā*, a work of Narahari Cakravartī, describes the events, through the description of the *parikramā* of Vṛndāvana performed by Śrīnivāsa Ācārya led by Rāghava Paṇḍita, the elderly follower of Śrī Caitanya:

³⁸⁹ In the epilogue of the *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, Rūpa Gosvāmī prays that this play, like a flower garland, which was strung by Rūpa Gosvāmī on the request of his dear friend Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, should for a moment decorate Dāsa Gosvāmī's neck. (Epilogue, verse 1) I use the translation of Kuśākratha Prabhu.

One time Rūpa Gosvāmī had given the drama *Lalitā-mādhava-nāṭaka* to Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī. This book describes the intense feelings of love in separation. After reading the book, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī cried day and night in agitation and became mad in distress. Sometimes he went far off to stay, leaving the book, and sometimes he fell to the ground keeping the book to his chest. People who saw the various states of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's ecstasy as he lost consciousness became worried and struck with wonder. Thinking of a cure for Raghunātha's condition, Rūpa Gosvāmī quickly finished writing *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*. Śrī Rūpa then gave Raghunātha the new book and requested him to taste its contents and return *Lalitā-mādhava-nāṭaka* for editing. Although Raghunātha was reluctant to give up *Lalitā-mādhava*, when he heard that Rūpa Gosvāmī wanted to edit it, he relented. Taking and reading *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, he tasted different ecstasies and thus merged in an ocean of happiness. O Śrīnivāsa, what can I say about the activities of Sanātana, Rūpa, and Raghunātha? (*Mathurā-maṇḍala-parikramā*)

The intensity of the emotional response to *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is dictated by the firmness of the *sthāyi-bhāva*, *Kṛṣṇa-rati* in the heart of a devotee, and Rūpa Gosvāmī urges us to develop that love further, to facilitate the greater depth of sensitivity and appreciation. This is surely diametrically opposed to the dry hearts of dramatic critics like A. B. Keith, whose heart was not able to relish even a drop of *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*:

*apriyādeḥ kriyā kuryān nālaukiky api vismayam
asādharaṇy api manāk karoty eva priyasya sā
priyāt priyasya kim uta sarva-lokottarottarā*

When an unloved person performs extraordinary acts, that is not very astonishing, but when a loved person performs actions even a little uncommon, they immediately produce astonishment.

Therefore, it goes without saying that if the Supreme Lord, the dearest person to all, performs deeds that are most extraordinary, it will certainly produce astonishment. (BRS, 4. 2. 12)

❧ Conclusion ❧

Through the thesis, I have tried to present a lively alternative to the stances of mundane poetic theorists on *bhakti*. Far from not being a *rasa*, *bhakti* is the supreme *rasa* par excellence for the *Vaiṣṇava* devotees like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who have spent their lives under the blossoming *kadamba* trees of Vraja, filled with devotional sentiments that have spilled into their literary works.

The thesis presents a comparative study of different articulations of the experience of *bhakti-rasa*, going through the history of the poetic theory. Ending the long monopoly of Abhinavagupta and *śānta-rasa* in the field of aesthetics, we find ourselves impressed with the soundness of the *Vaiṣṇava* doctrine of the *rasa*-hood of *bhakti*. The appearance of *bhakti-rasa* within the poetic theory overturns the existing hierarchy by defeating *śānta* with its supreme sweetness and variegatedness, and by surpassing even *mokṣa*, the commonly understood highest goal. Above liberation, the world of Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* opens in front of the perfected *sādhaka*, who wakes up energized by the Lord's internal potency, attracted to the Supreme Lord in one of the five *bhakti-rasas*. These *bhakti-rasas* are understood as fixed relationships with the Lord rather than momentary excitements in contact with poetry, and a distinction between *bhakti-rasas* and *kāvya-rasas* is effectively made in the work of Kavi Karṇapūra. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī gracefully articulates the supremacy of *bhakti* in comparison with *brahmāsvāda*, and, a step removed, mundane *rasāsvāda*.

The research then moves to devotional drama as an effective tool in arousing, relishing and deepening one's devotional sentiments. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described as the *aprākṛta-nāyaka*, decisively kept apart from mundane heroes of poetic works. He is the supreme *viṣayāmbana* of *bhakti-rasa* for His devotees, who appreciate His qualities and personality through their eyes anointed with love. The thesis moves through the intricate plots of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Vidagdha-* and *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭakas*, with a sidelong study of his *Nāṭaka-candrikā*, and concludes with a few notes on the topic of *vipralambha* as the highest perfection of devotional emotion.

While some readers thirst for joy and entertainment in poetry and drama, the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* hanker after the highest levels of emotional susceptibility, often resembling deep anguish and pain to an untrained outsider. As Jīva Gosvāmī comments, in the experiences of separation from the Lord, the basis of the relationship is always love for Him, and the pleasure of having succeeded in

reverting one's attention and affection to the Supreme Lord. In this sense, even separation is always pleasing, and if nothing else, leads to newer and newer enraptured meetings with the eternal Supreme Lord, who is far beyond the temporary dream of mundane existence.

*rasam praśaṁsantu kavitva-niṣṭhā brahmāmṛtaṁ veda-śiro-niviṣṭāḥ
vayaṁ tu guñja-kalitāvataṁsaṁ gṛhīta-vaṁsaṁ kaṁ api śrayāmaḥ*

Let those who are attached to poetry praise mundane rasas and let those who are submerged in the study of the *Vedas* praise the nectar of Brahman. But we will simply take shelter of a certain person who holds a flute and wears a *guñja* necklace. (*Padyāvalī*, verse 76, authored by Yādavendra Purī)

❧ *Appendices* ❧

Appendix 1: The Scheme of the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

Pūrva-vibhāga: Bhagavad-bhakti-bheda (Eastern Division: The Stages of Bhagavad-bhakti)

Sāmānya-bhakti-laharé
Sādhana-bhakti-laharé
Bhāva-bhakti-laharé
Prema-bhakti-laharé

Dakṣiṇa-vibhāga: Sāmānya-bhagavad-bhakti-rasa (Southern Division: General Ingredients of Bhakti-rasa)

Vibhāva-laharé
Anubhāva-laharé
Sāttvika-bhāva-laharé
Vyabhicāri-bhāva-laharé
Sthāyi-bhāva-laharé

Pāścīma-vibhāga: Mukhya-bhakti-rasa (Western Division: The Primary Bhakti-rasas)

Çānta-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Préti-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Preya-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Vatsala-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Madhura-bhakti-rasa-laharé

Uttara-vibhāga: Gauṇa-bhakti-rasa (Northern Division: The Secondary Bhakti-rasas)

Hāsya-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Adbhuta-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Vēra-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Karuṇa-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Raudra-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Bhayānaka-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Bēbhatsa-bhakti-rasa-laharé
Maitrē-vaira-sthiti-laharé
Rasābhāsa-laharé

Appendix 2: Terminology of the Aesthetic Experience in Various Translations

	<i>Ballantyne</i>	<i>Haberman</i>	<i>Gnoli</i>	<i>Dwivedi</i>	<i>Bhanu Swami</i>	<i>De</i>	<i>Unni</i>
<i>Bhāva</i>	mood	emotion	feeling	emotion	uses only Sanskrit terms throughout	Emotion	emotion
<i>Sthāyī</i>	permanent mood	foundational emotion	fundamental feeling, permanent mental state	basic emotion	-----	dominant or permanent feeling	permanent mood
<i>Vibhāva</i>	excitant	excitant	determinant	determinant	-----	excitant	determinant
<i>Anubhāva</i>	ensuant	indication	consequent	ensuant	-----	ensuant	consequent
<i>Vyabhicārī</i>	accessory	transitory emotion	transitory mental state	transitory or auxiliary	-----	auxiliary feeling	transitory mood
<i>Sāttvika</i>	spontaneous indication	response	-----	-----	-----	external sign of internal emotion	involuntary evidence of internal feeling
<i>Sattva</i> ³⁹⁰	purity	pure and luminous quality	sattva	-----	-----	-----	temperament, mind
<i>Prema</i>	-----	supreme love	-----	-----	-----	love	-----
<i>Bhakti</i>	-----	devotion	religious devotion	-----	-----	religious devotion	-----
<i>Vāsanā</i>	imagination, cultivated intellectual susceptibility	unconscious latent impression	latent impression, aesthetic sensibility	impression	previous experience	latent germ of feeling	-----

³⁹⁰ In its marginal sense related to the *sāttvika-bhāvas*.

<i>Camatkāra</i>	hyper-physical wonder	wonder	astonishment, wonder, surprise	-----	-----	-----	-----
<i>Hādaya-samvāda</i>	-----	-----	the consent of the heart	correspondence of heart, aesthetic sensibility	-----	-----	-----
<i>Sahādaya</i>	man of poetic sensibility	sensitive reader	individual possessed aesthetic sensibility	connoisseur	-----	-----	-----
<i>Uddēpana</i>	-----	enhancing excitant	-----	stimulating cause	-----	enhancing excitant	-----
<i>Ālambana</i>	-----	substantial excitant	-----	substrate cause	-----	substantial excitant	-----
<i>Vītiya</i>	-----	object of love	-----	-----	-----	object	-----
<i>Āśraya</i>	-----	vessel of love	-----	-----	-----	ground	-----
<i>Rasa</i>	flavour, sentiment	dramatic, sentiment, aesthetic enjoyment	rasa	rasa	-----	sentiment	sentiment
<i>Dhvani</i>	suggestion	-----	resonance	suggestion	-----	-----	-----

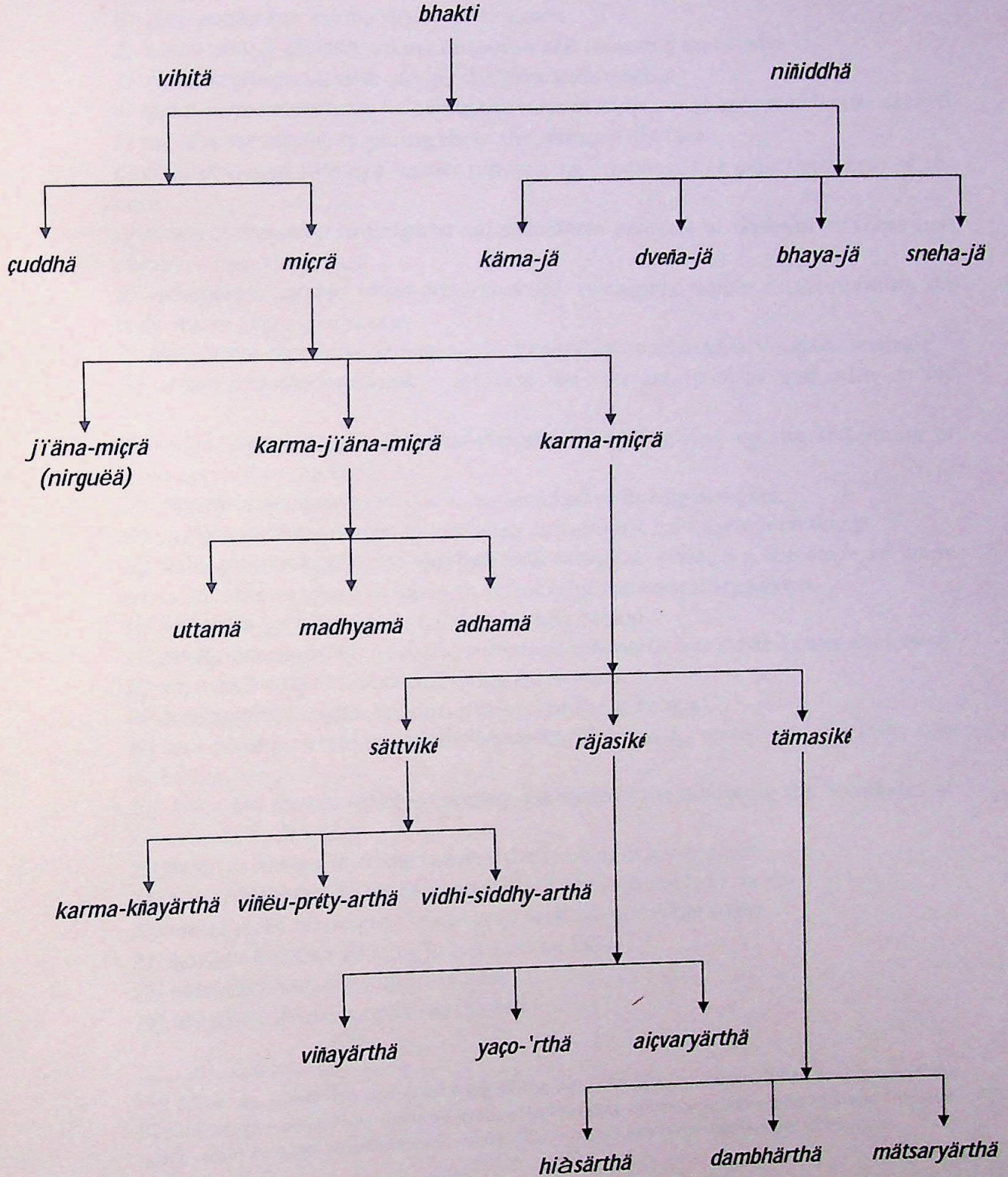
Works consulted:

- J. R. Ballantyne, *The Sāhitya-darpana or Mirror of Composition*, Calcutta 1875.
D. L. Haberman, *The Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu of Rūpa Gosvāmin*, Delhi 2003.
R. Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta*, Varanasi 1985.
R. C. Dwivedi, *The Poetic Light – Kāvya-prakāśa of Mammaṭa*, Delhi 1977.
Bhanu Swami, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Chennai 2006.
S.K. De, *Early History of Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, Calcutta 1945.
N. P. Unni, *Nāṭya-śāstra*, Delhi 2003.

Appendix 3:

Divisions of Bhakti in the Muktaṭphala

As presented in the edition of the Śāṇḍilya-bhakti-sūtras
by Acharya Baladeva Upadhyaya (Varanasi 1998), p. 19.



Appendix 4: The 64 Aṅgas of Bhakti

(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, 1. 2. 74-95)³⁹¹

- 1) *guru-padācraṇa*: taking shelter of the guru
- 2) *kāñḍa-dēkīādi-ṇikīāḍa*: taking initiation and receiving knowledge
- 3) *viṇrambhena guroṁ sevā*: serving the guru with respect
- 4) *sādhū-varmānuvartana*: following the rules of scripture as approved by the ācāryas
- 5) *sad-dharma-pācchā*: inquiring about the ultimate dharma
- 6) *bhogādi-tyāgaṁ kāñḍasya hetave*: renouncing enjoyment to gain the mercy of the Lord
- 7) *nivāso dvārakādaṁ ca gaṁgāder api sannidhau*: residing in Dvārakā or other holy places, or near the Gaṁgā
- 8) *vyāvahāreṇu sarveṇu yāvad-arthānuvartitā*: remaining simple in maintaining the body and in general behavior
- 9) *hari-vāsara-sammāna*: observing the Ekādaśī-vrata and other Vaiṇava festivals
- 10) *dhātry-aṇvatthādi-gaurava*: respecting the āmalakī, āsvattha and other sacred items
- 11) *sangā-tyāgo vidūreḍa bhagavad-vimukhair janaiṁ*: giving up the association of those opposed to the Lord
- 12) *ṇiṇyādy-ananubandhitva*: not being attached to having disciples
- 13) *mahārambhādy-anudyama*: not being enthusiastic for huge undertakings
- 14) *bahu-grantha-kalābhyaśa-vyākhyā-vāda-vivarjana*: giving up the study of many books, in order to earn a living or to defeat others in useless arguments
- 15) *vyāvahāre 'py akārpaḍya*: giving up miserly behavior
- 16) *ṇokādy-avaṇa-vartitā*: not being subject to lamentation or other extreme emotions
- 17) *anya-devānavajīā*: not blaspheming the devatās
- 18) *bhūtānudvega-dāyitā*: not disturbing other living beings
- 19) *sevā-nāmāparādhānām udbhavābhāva-kāritā*: avoiding offenses to the Deity and to the holy name
- 20) *kāñḍa-tad-bhakta-vidveṇa-vinindādy-asahiṇḍutā*: not tolerating the blasphemy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees
- 21) *dhātir vaiñḍava-ciṇnānām*: wearing the symbols of a Vaiṇava
- 22) *harer nāmākīarasya ca*: decorating the body with the holy names
- 23) *nirmālyādeṇ ca*: wearing His prasāda garlands and other items
- 24) *tasyāgre tāḍḍava*: dancing in front of the Deity
- 25) *daḍḍavan-nati*: offering obeisances
- 26) *abhyutthāna*: rising up to see the Lord

³⁹¹ I follow the translation and numbering of the aṅgas by Bhānu Swami. Other translators of the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu have slight differences in breaking up the original verses of Rūpa Gosvāmī, which results in minor variations and overlappings, without any serious difference of opinion.

- 27) *anuvrajyā*: following His procession
- 28) *gatiū sthāne*: going to His temple
- 29) *parikrama*: circumambulating Him, the temple, the *dhāma*
- 30) *arcanam*: serving the Deity
- 31) *paricaryā*: performing menial service
- 32) *gēta*: singing for the Deity
- 33) *sa ī kērtana*: singing in a group
- 34) *japa*: performing *japa*
- 35) *vijī apti*: offering words or sentiments
- 36) *stava-pāṭha*: reciting prayers
- 37) *naivedya-svāda*: respecting *prasāda* food
- 38) *pādyā-svāda*: respecting *pādyā* water
- 39) *dhūpa-mālyādi-saurabhya*: smelling the incense and garlands offered to the Lord
- 40) *ṣṛé-mūrteū spāññi*: touching the Deity
- 41) *ṣṛé-mūrter ékñāēa*: taking *darśana* of the Deity
- 42) *ārātrikotsavāder ékñāēa*: observing the *āratis* and festivals
- 43) *ṣṛavaēa*: hearing about the Lord
- 44) *tat-kāpekñāēa*: accepting the mercy of the Lord
- 45) *smāti*: remembering Him
- 46) *dhyāna*: meditating on Him
- 47) *dāsya*: acting as His servant
- 48) *sakhya*: thinking of the Lord as a friend
- 49) *ātma-nivedana*: offering oneself to the Lord
- 50) *nija-priyopaharaēa*: offering Him the best and the dearest items
- 51) *tad-arthe 'khila-ceññita*: making full efforts for the Lord
- 52) *sarvathā ṣaraēāpatti*: surrendering to the Lord
- 53) *tadēyānāḥ sevana*: a) *tulasé-sevana*: serving Tulasi
- 54) b) *ṣāstra-sevana*: serving the scriptures
- 55) c) *mathurā-sevana*: serving the holy places
- 56) d) *vaiññēava-sevana*: serving the Vaiṣṇavas
- 57) *yathā-vaibhava-sāmagrē-sad-goññēbhīr mahotsava*: celebrating the festivals according to one's means in the association of the devotees
- 59) *ūrjādaro viṣeññēa yātrā janma-dinādiñu*: carefully celebrating Janmāṣṭamī and other special occasions like Kārtika
- 60) *ṣṛaddhā viṣeññataū prētiū ṣṛé-mūrter a ī ghri-sevane*: serving the Deity with great faith and affection
- 61) *ṣṛémad-bhāgavatārthānām āsvādo rasikaiū saha*: relishing the *Bhāgavata* in the association of devotees
- 62) *sajātēyāṣaye snigdhe sādhanu sa ī gañh svato vare*: associating with like-minded, affectionate, superior devotees
- 63) *nāma-sa ī kērtana*: chanting the holy name
- 64) *ṣṛé-mathurā-maēḍale sthiti*: residing in the holy places like Mathurā

Appendix 5: The Sixty-four Qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Sanskrit word	Bhaktivedānta Swami	Bhānu Swami	David Haberman
1. <i>suramyāṅga</i>	beautiful bodily features	beautiful limbs	a beautiful body
2. <i>sarva-sal-lakṣaṇānvita</i>	auspicious characteristics	all auspicious bodily features	endowed with all excellent features
3. <i>rucira</i>	pleasing	pleasing to behold	good looking
4. <i>tejasā yukta</i>	effulgent	possessing vitality	brilliant
5. <i>balīyān</i>	strong	strong	strong
6. <i>vayasānvita</i>	ever youthful	endowed with ideal age	youthful
7. <i>vividhādbhuta-bhāṣā-vit</i>	wonderful linguist	knows a variety of astonishing languages	conversant in many wonderful languages
8. <i>satya-vākya</i>	truthful	truthful	truthful
9. <i>priyam vada</i>	pleasing talker	speaks in a pleasing manner	pleasant in speech
10. <i>vāvadūka</i>	fluent	eloquent	eloquent
11. <i>supāṇḍitya</i>	highly learned	learned	learned
12. <i>buddhimān</i>	highly intelligent	intelligent	intelligent
13. <i>pratibhānvita</i>	genius	filled with new ideas	witty
14. <i>vidagdha</i>	artistic	aesthetic	artistic
15. <i>catura</i>	clever	clever	adroit
16. <i>daṣa</i>	expert	skilful	dexterous
17. <i>kṛtajña</i>	grateful	grateful	grateful
18. <i>sudṛḍha-vrata</i>	determined	keeps His vows	resolute
19. <i>deśa-kāla-supātra-jña</i>	expert judge of time and circumstances	knowledgeable of time, place and person	knowledgeable of the right time, place, and receptacle

20. śāstra-cakṣu	seer by the authority of the scriptures	sees through the eyes of scripture	mindful of scripture
21. śuci	pure	pure	pure
22. vaśī	self-controlled	controls His senses	self-controlled
23. sthira	steadfast	persevering	persistent
24. dānta	forbearing	patient	tolerant
25. kṣamā-śīla	forgiving	tolerant	patient
26. gambhīra	grave	inscrutable	profound
27. dhṛtimān	self-satisfied	steadfast	steadfast
28. sama	possessing equilibrium	uniform	impartial
29. vadānya	magnanimous	generous	generous
30. dhārmika	religious	virtuous	virtuous
31. śūra	heroic	heroic	brave
32. karuṇa	compassionate	compassionate	compassionate
33. mānya-māna-kṛt	respectful	respectful to persons worthy of respect	respectful
34. dakṣiṇa	gentle	compliant	favorable
35. vinayī	liberal	modest	humble
36. hrīmān	shy	bashful	modest
37. śaraṇāgata-pālaka	protector of surrendered souls	protector of those who take shelter of Him	protective of those who have taken His shelter
38. sukhī	happy	happy	happy
39. bhakta-suhr̥t	well-wisher of His devotees	friend of the devotees	friend of devotees
40. prema-vaśya	controlled by love	controlled by love	captivated by love
41. sarva-śubhankara	all-auspicious	benefactor of all	beneficent to everyone
42. pratāpī	most powerful	glorious	imposing
43. kīrtimān	all-famous	renowned	famous

44.	<i>rakta-loka</i>	popular	object of attraction for all	the impassioner of the world
45.	<i>sādhū-samāśraya</i>	partial to devotees	shelter of the devotees	partial to the good
46.	<i>nārī-gaṇa-manohārī</i>	very attractive to all women	attractive to women	charmer of women
47.	<i>sarvārādhya</i>	all-worshipable	worshipable by all	worthy of everyone's worship
48.	<i>saṃdḍhimān</i>	all-opulent	endowed with the greatest wealth	prosperous
49.	<i>varīyān</i>	all-honorable	the most important	eminent
50.	<i>īśvara</i>	the supreme controller	the controller	supreme
51.	<i>sadā-svarūpa-samprāpta</i>	changeless	always situated in His eternal form	always maintains His own form
52.	<i>sarva-jña</i>	all-cognizant	omniscient	omniscient
53.	<i>nitya-nūtaṇa</i>	ever fresh	forever young	ever fresh and new
54.	<i>sac-cid-ānanda-sāndrāṅga</i>	<i>sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha</i>	has a body made of condensed eternity, knowledge and bliss	a concentrated form of Being, Consciousness and Bliss
55.	<i>sarva-siddhi-niṣevita</i>	possessing all mystic perfections	possesses all <i>siddhis</i>	endowed with all spiritual powers
56.	<i>avicitīya-mahā-śakti</i>	having inconceivable potencies	has inconceivable great energies	endowed with inconceivably magnificent energy
57.	<i>koṭi-brahmāṇḍa-vigraha</i>	His body generates innumerable universes	His form expands over millions of universes	has millions of universes existing within His body
58.	<i>avatārāvalī-bhīja</i>	original source of all incarnations	source of the numerous <i>avatāras</i>	the origin of all incarnations
59.	<i>hatārī-gati-dāyaka</i>	giver of salvation to the enemies	rewards even the enemies	gives salvation to slain enemies
60.	<i>ātmārāma-gaṇakarṣī</i>	attractor of liberated souls	He kills attracts the <i>ātmārāmas</i>	attracts all those who are

61. <i>līlā-mādhurya</i>	performer of wonderful activities	His special pastimes	absorbed in the Self performs divine love plays
62. <i>prema-mādhurya</i>	surrounded by loving devotees	His devotees endowed with special <i>prema</i>	supreme love of His dear friends
63. <i>veṇu-mādhurya</i>	attractive through flute-playing	the sweetness of His flute	the sweet flute
64. <i>rūpa-mādhurya</i>	exquisitely beautiful	the sweetness of His form	sweet form

References

ABBOTT, Justin E., *Life of Tukaram, Translation from Mahāpati's Bhakta-līlāmāta, Ch. 25 to 40*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1980 (first edition Poona 1930).

-----, *The Life of Eknāth – Çré Eknāth Charita. Translated from the Bhakta-līlāmāta*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1981 (first edition Poona 1927).

BAHADUR, Krishna P., *The Poems of Sūradāsa*, Abhinav Publications, Delhi 1999.

BANERJEE, Rita, *The Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu – A Critical Study*. Ashutosh Prakashan, Varanasi 2008.

BÄUMER, Bettina (Ed.), *Mysticism in Shaivism and Christianity*, D. K. Printworld, New Delhi 1997.

BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI, A. C., *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*,

-----, *Çrémad Bhāgavatam*,

-----, *Caitanya-caritāmāta*,

-----, *The Nectar of Devotion, A Summary Study of the Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu*,

-----, *The Nectar of Instruction*,

-----, *The Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*,

-----, *The Mukunda-mālā-stotra*³⁹².

BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA SARASVATĪ ṬHĀKURA, *The Brahma-saṅhitā*.

BHANDARKAR, R. G., *Vaiṇāvism, Çaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi 2001 (originally published by Verlag von Karl J. Trubner, Strassbourg 1913).

³⁹² All the works of Bhaktivedānta Swami and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī are used in their electronic form, the *Bhaktivedānta Veda Base*, Version 2003.1, published by the Bhaktivedānta Archives. Since the pages in the electronic version are not numbered, I have supplied verse numbers in quotations.

BHĀNU SWAMI, *The Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu of Çrēla Rūpa Gosvāmī*, Sri Vaikuntha Enterprises, Chennai 2006.

BHARADVĀJA, K., *A Philosophical Study of the Concept of Viñēu in the Purāṇas*, Pitambar Publishing Company, New Delhi 1981.

BHATTACHARYA, N. N. (Ed.), *Medieval Bhakti Movements in India*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi 1999.

BON MAHĀRĀJA, Bhakti Hṛdaya, *Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu*. Institute of Oriental Philosophy, Vrindavan 1965.

CHAKRAVARTI, Ramakanta, *Vaiñēavism in Bengal (1486-1900)*, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Calcutta 1985.

CHAKRAVARTI, Sudhindra Chandra, *Philosophical Foundation of Bengal Vaiñēavism*, Calcutta 2004.

CHATTERJEE, Chinmayi, *Rasagāṅgādhara of Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha with Marma-prakāṣa by Nāgeṣa Bhaṇḍa, First Ānana*, Asiatic Society, Calcutta 1992.

CHAUBEY, Braj Bihari, *The New Vedic Selection*. Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi and Varanasi, 1973.

COWARD, Harold G. (Ed.), *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism*. Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi 1991.

DAS, Sunil Kumar, *Çrē Caitanya and Guru Nānak – A Comparative Study of Vaiñēavism and Sikhism*, Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta 1985.

DE, Sushil Kumar (Ed.), *Padyāvalī*, Dacca University Oriental Publication Series, Dacca 1934.

-----, *Early History of the Vaiñēava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, KLM Publishers, Calcutta 1945.

DELMONICO, Neal, *Sacred Rapture: A Study of the Religious Aesthetic of Rūpa Gosvāmin*, PhD thesis, Chicago 1990.

DWIVEDI, Prof. Rewāprasāda, *Kāvyaḷāṅkāra-kārikā*, Kālidāsa Saṁsthāna, Varanasi 2001.

DWYER, William J., *Bhakti in Kabér*, Associated Book Agency, Patna 1981.

DIMOCK, Edward C., *Place of the Hidden Moon*, Chicago University Press, 1966.

ELKMAN, Stuart Mark, *Jéva Gosvāmin's Tattvasandarbhā – A Study on the Philosophical and Sectarian Development of the Gauḍeya Vaiṣṇava Movement*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1986.

FARQUHAR, J. N., *Outline of Indian Religious Literature*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1984 (Second Indian Reprint).

GOEL, Sita Ram, *Hindu Temples – What Happened to Them. Part II: Islamic Evidence*. Voice of India, New Delhi 1991.

GOSWAMI SHASTRI, Bhagabat Kumar, *The Bhakti Cult in Ancient India*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi 2002 (Third Edition).

HABERMAN, David, *Journey Through the Twelve Forests – An Encounter with Krishna*. Oxford University Press, New York 1994.

-----, *Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu of Rūpa Gosvāmin*. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 2003.

-----, *Acting As A Way of Salvation – A Study of Rāgānugā Bhakti Sādhana*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 2001.

-----, *River of Love in an Age of Pollution*. University of California Press, Berkeley 2006.

HARDY, Friedhelm, *Viraha Bhakti – The Early History of Kāñṛea Devotion in South India*. Oxford University Press, Oxford – New York – Delhi 1983.

HIRIYANNA, Mysore, *Art Experience*. Kavyalaya Publishers, Mysore 1954.

HAWLEY, John Stratton, WULFF, Donna Marie (Eds.), *The Divine Consort – Rādhā and the Goddesses of India*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1995 (reprint of the Indian Edition of 1984).

HAWLEY, John Stratton, *At Play With Krishna – Pilgrimage Dramas from Brindavan*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1992.

JAISWAL, Suvira, *The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi 1981.

JHA, Ramakanta, *The Vidagdha-mādhava of Ṣṛī Rūpa Gosvāmī*. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi 1970.

JOHNSTON, E. H., *Aṣvaghōṣa's Buddha-carita*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1998.

KALE, M. R. (Tr.), *The Abhijñāna-śākuntalam of Kālidāsa*,

-----, *The Meghadūta of Kālidāsa*,

-----, *The Ratnāvalī of Ṣṛī Harīṣa*,

-----, *The Uttara-rāma-carita of Bhavabhūti*,

-----, *The Veēt-saṭhāra of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa*. All published at Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, in numerous reprints and editions.

KINSLEY, David R. *The Divine Player – A Study of Kāṇḍa-līlā*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1979.

KRISHNA, Francine E., KRISHNA, Daya, LATH, Mukund (Eds.), *Bhakti – A Contemporary Discussion*. Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi 2000.

LOPEZ, Donald S. Jr., *Religions of India in Practice*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi 1998.

MAINKAR, T. G. *Theory of the Sandhis and the Sandhya ųgas*. Pune 1960.

MAJUMDAR, Devika, *Gauḍīya dāṣṇī mein Bhakti-rasāyana*. PhD thesis, Banaras Hindu University.

MASSON, J. L., PATWARDHAN, M. V., *Ṣānta-rasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics*. BORI, Poona 1969.

-----, *Aesthetic Rapture*. Poona 1970.

MACNICOL, Nicol, *Indian Theism from the Vedic to the Muhammadan Period*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi 1968.

McDANIEL, June, *The Madness of the Saints – Ecstatic Religion in Bengal*. University of Chicago Press, 1989.

MAHADEVAN, T. M. P., *The Hymns of Çaṭkara*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1997.

MISHRA, Acharya Ramchandra, *Chaitanya-chandrodaya-nāṭakam of Kavikarēapūra*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi 1966.

MUKHERJI, Shyam Chand, *A Study of Vaiṣṇavism in Ancient and Medieval Bengal*. Punthi Pustak, Calcutta 1966.

NAGAR, R. S., *Alaṭkāra-kaustubha of Kavi Karēapūra*. Parimal Publications, Delhi 1993.

NĀRĀYAṆA, Bhaktivedānta, *Çrī Bhakti-rasāmāta-sindhu-bindu*. Gauḍīya Vedānta Publications, Mathura 1996.

PANDE, Susmita, *Birth of Bhakti in Indian Religions and Art*. Books & Books, New Delhi 1982.

-----, *Medieval Bhakti Movement (Its History and Philosophy)*. Kusumanjali Prakashan, Meerut 1994.

PANDEY, Janardan Shastri, *Madhusūdana Sarasvatī Viracita Çrī Bhagavad-bhakti-rasāyana*. Chowkhamba Vidya Bhavan, Varanasi 1998.

PANDEY, Kanti Chandra, *Abhinavagupta – Historical and Philosophical Study*. Chowkhamba, Varanasi 1963.

-----, *Comparative Aesthetics I, II*. Chowkhamba, Varanasi 1972.

PANDIT, Durga Prasad, M. M., SHASTRI Panashikar, V. L., (Eds.), *Ujjvala-nēlamañi of Rūpa Gosvāmī*. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Varanasi 1985 (Reprint of the Kāvya-mālā edition, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay).

RAGHAVACHARIAR, S. S., *Vedārtha-saṅgraha of Çrī Rāmānujācārya*. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 2002.

RAGHAVAN, V., *The Number of Rasas*. Adyar Library and Research Centre, Chennai 1975 (Third Ed.)

RAMASWAMY, Krishnan, DE NICOLAS, Antonio, BANERJEE, Aditi (Eds.), *Invading the Sacred – An Analysis of Hinduism Studies in America*, Rupa and Company, New Delhi 2007.

RANGACHARYA, Adya, *Introduction to Bharata's Nāṭya-śāstra*. Popular Prakashan, Bombay 1966.

REDINGTON, James D., *Vallabhācārya on the Love Games of Kāñḍa*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1990.

ROSEN, Steven, *The Six Goswamis of Vrindavan*. Rasbihari Lal & Sons, Vrindavan 2002.

SANKARAN, A., *Some Aspects of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit or the Theories of Rasa and Dhvani*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi 1973.

SCHOMER, Karin, McLEOD, W. H. (Eds.), *The Sants – Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1987.

SEN, Dinesh Chandra, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*. Gian Publishing House, Delhi 1986.

SHAH, Idries, *The Sufis*. Doubleday & Company, Inc. New York 1964.

SHAH, J. G., *Shrimad Vallabhacharya – His Philosophy and Religion*. The Pushtimargiya Pustakalaya, Nadiad 1969.

SHARMA, Arvind, *Hinduism and Its Sense of History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2003.

SHARMA, Krishna, *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 2002.

SHARMA, Premlata, *Studies in Bhakti-rasa (Based on Ćrē Rūpa Gosvāmē)*. PhD thesis, Banaras Hindu University 1954.

SHARMA, Raghu Nath, *Bhakti in the Vaiñḇava Rasa-śāstra*. Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi 1996.

SHASTRI, S. N., *Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*. Chowkhamba, Varanasi 1961.

SHERIDAN, Daniel P., *Advaitic Theism of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1986.

SHUKLA SHASTRI, Babulal, *Nāṭaka-candrikā of Ṣṛī Rūpa Gosvāmī*. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi 1964.

-----, *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka of Ṣṛī Rūpa Gosvāmī*. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi 1998.

SIDDHANTASHREE, Rabindra Kumar, *Vaiṇēavism Through the Ages*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi 1985.

SMITH, Vincent A., *The Oxford History of India*. Oxford University Press, London 1981.

SRINIVASA CHARI, S. M., *Vaiṇēavism – Its Philosophy, Theology and Religious Discipline*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 2005 (Second reprint).

SWAIN, Rajalaxmi, *The Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka – A Study (With Introduction and Translation)*. Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, Delhi 2002.

SWAMI, Gambhirananda, *Bhagavad-gētā with the Commentary of Ṣaṭkarācārya*. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 2006.

-----, *Bhagavad-gētā with the Annotation Gūḍhārtha-dēpikā of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī*. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 2007.

SWAMI, Dhanurdhara, *Waves of Devotion – A Comprehensive Study of the Nectar of Devotion*. Bhagavat Books, USA 2000.

SWAMI, Mahadevananda, *Devotional Songs of Narsī Mehtā*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi 1995.

SWAMI, Nikhilananda, *Vedānta-sāra of Sadānanda*. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 1997.

SWAMI, Tapasyananda, *Bhakti Schools of Vedānta – Lives and Philosophies of Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Madhva, Vallabha and Caitanya*. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai 1990.

TRIPATHY, A. K., TRIPATHY, P. C., *The Gita Govinda of Sri Jayadev*. Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 2006.

UNDERHILL, Evelyn, *The Essentials of Mysticism*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, 2007.

UNNI, N. P., *Nāṭya-śāstra*. Nag Publications, Delhi 2003.

UPĀDHYĀYA, Ācārya Baladeva, *Bhāratīya Vālmaya mein Çrī Rādhā*. Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, Patna 2001.

-----, *Çāṇḍīya-bhakti-sūtram*. Publication Dept., Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi 1998.

VANDANA Mataji, *Nāma Japa – Prayer of the Name in the Hindu and Christian Traditions*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1997.

VAUDEVILLE, Charlotte, *Kabīr*. Oxford University Press 1974.

VYAS, Ramnarayan, *The Bhāgavata Bhakti Cult and Three Advaita Ācāryas – Çaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Vallabha*. Nag Publishers, Delhi 1977.

WULFF, Donna, *Drama as a Mode of Religious Realization – The Vidagdha-mādhava of Rūpa Gosvāmin*. PhD thesis, Harvard 1977. Published in Chico, California, 1984.

WERNER, Karl (Ed.), *Love Divine – Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism*. Curzon Press, University of Durham Indological Series, 1993.

❧ Curriculum Vitae ❧



Eva Cesar (born Eva Puksic, 20. 12. 1976 in Slovenia, to Slavko and Danica Puksic) has completed her primary and secondary education in Slovenia. A number of successes in regional competitions in Mathematics and Logic, and the 15. place in a national English contest in the year 1989 have earned her the prestigious 'Scholarship for talented students of Slovenia' which she was receiving for twelve years. In 2001, she graduated from the University of Slovenia in Ljubljana, majoring in Indoeuropean Linguistics. The title of her Diploma paper was *An Overview of Traditional Schools of Sanskrit Grammar*. The paper received the highest mark. In 2002, she entered the Masters Degree course at Banaras Hindu University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Sanskrit. She passed the M. A. Final examination in 2004 in First Class (72 %), and applied for the PhD course at the same department. She was admitted to the PhD course in September 2005, and received another scholarship for talented students from the Slovenian government. A year later, the Indian government has granted her a scholarship through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. During her high school education, she has mastered English, German and French, and during her undergraduate studies she has studied Old Greek, Latin and Arabic. In India, she has learned Hindi and took courses of spoken Sanskrit. She has completed the Slovenian translation of the famous classical Sanskrit drama, the *Uttara-rāma-carita* of Bhavabhūti, and is arranging its publication in the near future. Recently, she has published parts of her research work in a national publication by the Embassy of Slovenia in New Delhi at the occasion of the presidency of Slovenia in the European Union in 2008. Along with her husband, Sebastian Cesar, she is an active member of ISKCON, and has helped in establishing its branch in Slovenia. They have both accepted formal *dikṣā* under the names Kiśora Dāsa and Ananta-sarovara Dāsi. The textual and sociological research conducted during the last few years, leading to the present doctoral dissertation, explores the philosophical roots of devotional religious movements like ISKCON, in the medieval writings of the *bhakti* saints.

